



Original Sin And Salvation

- Original Sin a Myth than a Revelation
- Episode in the Garden Led to Rise of Man than Fall
- No Salvation without Monotheism and Repentance

Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah

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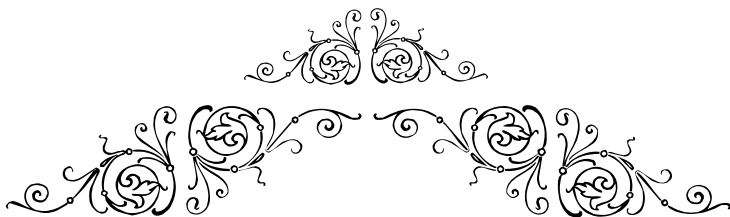
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to

The Almighty Allah

The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful



By the Same Author:

Hagar the Princess, 2012 (2nd Ed. 2016).

Israelites versus Other Nations, 2012.

Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages (2 Volumes) (2017)

Islam as Emancipator of Women (2 Volumes) (2019)

→ Forthcoming Books:

New World Order or Kingdom of God on Earth

God and the Universe

The Promised Prophet and Paran

Robert Wright (b. 1957) the American journalist and author observed that:

In the Bible, God had occasionally been depicted as physically anthropomorphic (sitting on a throne, for example) and often as psychologically anthropomorphic (prone to jealousy, rage, and so on). This conception of gods had been falling out of favor among Greek philosophers since Xenophanes, five centuries before Philo's time, noted its arbitrariness. **If horses and cattle did theology, he had asserted, "horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle."**

(The Evolution of God, p. 218-219).

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Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah,
Chairman,
ISRC, Islamabad, 2020.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD/CE	anno domini (Latin), in the year of the Lord, Common/ Christian Era.
Ar	Arab, Arabia, Arabian, Arabic.
B	Bible.
BC	Before Christ; Bible Commentary; Biblical Commentary.
BCE	Before Christian/Common Era.
c/ca	About, approximately (Latin circa)
CE	Common Era: secular form of AD.
Ch	Chapter.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible.
Ed	Editor, edited by, edition.
Edn	Edition.
e.g./eg	for example (Latin exempli gratia).
Enc	Encyclopedia/Encyclopaedia/Encyclopedic.
Heb	Hebrew.
i.e.	that is, that means, namely.
MT/Mt	Massoretic /Masoretic Text of the OT; Matthew; Mount.
NT	New Testament of the Bible Contains 27 books: 4 Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters), and lastly Revelations. It was originally written in Greek, whereas Jesus Christ delivered his message in the Aramaic language.
op.cit.	in the work already quoted (Latin opere citato).
OT	Old Testament of the Bible Consists of 39 books: The first five are collectively called the Pentateuch or Torah. It was originally written in Heb.
ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﺍﻟﺴﻼﻡ	peace and blessings of Allah upon him.
p/pp	Page/pages.
P	Priestly tradition of the OT of the Bible.
Pbl/pbg	Publisher(s) Publication(s) /Publishing/.
Rvd	Revised.
St	Saint.
s.v.	Under the word or heading.
Tr.	Translator, translation, translated by.
Uni./Univ.	University.
v/vv	Verse/verses of the Bible.
V	Version (Tr.) of the Bible.
Vol.	Volume.
(...)	It indicates that some word, words, sentence, sentences, line, or lines have been left over from the original quotation.
(....)	It shows that a sizeable text has been omitted from the original quotation.
[]	The square brackets are used to insert something by the Tr./Ed., which did not originally exist in the quotation.
AV/KJV	Authorized Version/King James Version.
CCB	The Christian Community Bible (Manila: Divine Word Pbln, 1988).
CEV	Contemporary English Version (NY: American Bible Society, 1995).
GNB/TEV	Good News Bible/ Today's English Version -do-.
GNB:REV	Good News Bible (Revised Edn), Minto: The B. Society in Australia Inc. NSW.
LB	The Living Bible (Illinois: Tyndale House Pblshrs. 1976)

MT	The Torah, The Mesoretic Text (Jewish Pbln. Society of America).
NAB	New American Bible, Catholic Bible Association, 1991.
NASB	The New American Standard Bible, Cambridge Univ. Press 1977.
NEB	The New English Bible, Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
NIV	New international Version, London, 1984.
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edn, Bombay: St. Paul's, 1993.
NKJV	New King James Version.
NLTr.	New Living Translation, 1996:
NOAB.	The New Oxf. Annotated Bible:
NRSV.	New Revised Standard Version:
RSV.	Revised Standard Version.
RBV	Revised Berkeley Version:
Peshitta	The Authorised Bible of the Church of the East, 1957.
Knox	Ronald A. Knox, Translation From the Vulgate, Macmillan & Co. 1957

Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

1. The Jewish Bible/OT

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Amos or Am	Amos	Judg. or Jgs	Judges
1 Chron. or 1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Kings or 1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Chron. or 2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Kings or 2 Kgs	2 Kings
Dan. or Dn	Daniel	Lam. or Lam	Lamentations
Deut. or Dt	Deuteronomy	Lev. or Lv	Leviticus
Eccles. or Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal. or Mal	Malachi
Esther or Est	Esther	Mic. or Mi	Micah
Exod. or Ex	Exodus	Nah. or Na	Nahum
Ezek. or Ez	Ezekiel	Neh. or Neh	Nehemiah
Ezra or Ezr	Ezra	Num. or Nm	Numbers
Gen. or Gn	Genesis	Obad. or Ob	Obadiah
Hab. or Hb	Habakkuk	Prov. or Prv	Proverbs
Hag. or Hg	Haggai	Ps. (pl.Pss.) or Ps (pl. Pss)	Psalms
Hosea or Hos	Hosea	Ruth or Ru	Ruth
Isa. or Is	Isaiah	1 Sam. or 1 Sm	1 Samuel
Jer. or Jer	Jeremiah	2 Sam. or 2 Sm	2 Samuel
Job or Jb	Job	Song of Sol. or Sg	Song of Solomon (=Song of Songs)
Joel or Jl	Joel	Zech. or Zec	Zechariah
Jon. or Jon	Jonah	Zeph. or Zep	Zephaniah
Josh. or Jo	Joshua		

2. The New Testament

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Luke or Lk	Luke
Apoc.	Apocalypse (=Revelation)	Mark or Mk	Mark
Col. or Col	Colossians	Matt. or Mt	Matthew
1 Cor. or 1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet. or 1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Cor. or 2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet. or 2 Pt	2 Peter
Eph. or Eph	Ephesians	Philem. or Phlm	Philemon
Gal. or Gal	Galatians	Phil. or Phil	Philippians
Heb. or Heb	Hebrews	Rev. or Rv	Revelation (=Apocalypse)
James or Jas	James	Rom. or Rom	Romans
John or Jn	John (Gospel)	1Thess. or 1Thes	1 Thessalonians
1 John or 1 Jn	1 John (Epistle)	2Thess. or 2Thes	2 Thessalonians
2 John or 2 Jn	2 John (Epistle)	1 Tim. or 1 Tm	1 Timothy
3 John or 3 Jn	3 John (Epistle)	2 Tim. or 2 Tm	2 Timothy
Jude	Jude	Titus or Ti	Titus

PREFACE

The revealed religions always depended upon the guidance received from the Lord as transmitted through His Prophets who rehearsed the exact words of the Lord to the communities assigned to them. Prophets being the representatives of the Lord also served as the role models of rectitude and righteousness to be imitated by their followers on Earth. Islam's first demand was, therefore, God consciousness and whole time obedience to His commandments. The believers were duty bound not only to obey the instructions of their Prophets but also to follow their examples and traditions in all matters pertaining to guidance from the Lord. Similarly, they also had to refrain from all matters prohibited by Him. Hence, **the followers of revealed religions had no other criteria to discriminate the wrong from the right except to verify the same from the exact words of the Lord or to find it in the authentic preachings and traditions of their Prophets.** Anything that could not be traced in the revealed words of the Lord or the rituals, preachings and legacies of the prophets could not be adopted as a precept of faith or conduct by their followers.

Christianity took a sharp diversion from the universal faith preached by the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ. The change was introduced not by Jesus Christ but by Saul a Jew of Tarsus who proudly claimed to be a Roman citizen. It was perhaps to conceal his Jewish origin and to conform to the Greco-Roman culture that he gave up his Jewish name and started calling himself 'Paul' so that he may be taken as part and parcel of the Roman community. The fourteen Epistles of St. Paul (c. 50-68 AD) form the earliest record of Christian scriptures in the New Testament. All the four Gospels, the Revelations and other letters included in the New Testament seem to have been written under the influence of the epistles of St. Paul who had neither been a companion of Jesus Christ nor an apostle chosen by him. Saul/Paul had converted to Christianity reportedly through a vision about five years after the death of Jesus Christ. It was, therefore, on the basis of the visions than the preachings of Jesus Christ that Saul of Tarsus developed a

new theology which is known as Christianity today. The epistles of Paul depend entirely on his own presumptions than any message from the Lord God or Jesus Christ.

St. Paul claimed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ towards the Gentiles. It was in the said posture that his teachings conformed to the multiplicity of the faiths, culture, mythology and theology prevailing in or around the Roman Empire. His teachings being friendly to the universality of the religion and perpetuity of the Roman Empire, soon received sponsorship from the Romans. Consequently, the collaboration of the Authorities and St. Paul succeeded to divert the monotheistic faith of the Jewish prophets including John and Jesus to the polytheistic faiths prevailing in various parts of the Roman Empire. Ultimately, it was in the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) convoked by the pagan Emperor Constantine the Great that the followers of St. Paul reached a consensus about the Triune God instead of the one and the only Lord God of the Israelites as revealed and rehearsed by all the prophets of Israel through the first three commandments in the Decalogue.

The doctrine of the *Original Sin* was, in fact, an innovation introduced by St. Paul. We cannot trace this concept anywhere in the Old Testament or the teachings of the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ. The followers of St. Paul, however, continued for centuries together to speculate on the Original Sin. It was during 415-425 that St. Augustine succeeded to present it in an acceptable form. Those who insist on the validity of this later speculation of human beings as against the Divine revelations are, therefore, trying to superimpose human reasoning over the far transcendent omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, foresight and foreknowledge of the Almighty. Our study in the matter reveals that the earliest Christian fathers did not attach primary importance to their acquaintance with the Lord and His attributes. It was due to the same reason that they did not try to comprehend the purpose of the Lord to create the universe and the duties/obligations of the living beings like angels, jinn and man towards Him.

The Old Testament did not stress on **the purpose of creation** explicitly while the New Testament is entirely silent on the matter. The Christians had no anxiety to trace the purpose of creation of man or the human obligations towards the Lord. It was, therefore, impossible for them to understand the wisdom of God for creating new species like Jinn and Human beings with such complexities of nature that were not traceable in any other creature in the universe. The said lack of knowledge was the main reason for their failure to know that evil or sin did not exist in the Universe for unknown billions of years even prior to the 'Big Bang' which according to the scientists occurred about 13.7 billion years ago. They were unaware of the fact that for all eternity the Universe had been operating with utmost perfection under compulsion of the Almighty. There had been no place for operation of free will leading to sin or evil in the world. Long after the Big Bang, the Almighty was pleased to create 2 new species i.e. Jinn and Man with freedom of thinking and choice between different options before them. Being free from programming and inbuilt guidance from the Almighty, they enjoyed liberty either to follow the guidance of the Lord or to fulfill their own lusts, appetites and desires. As such, the Jinn and Human beings had been the only two species to be tested and tried in the world. This was the reason that the Lord mentioned those two species as (ثقلان) i.e. laden with responsibilities to choose between the good or bad keeping in view the guidance of the Lord.

In our book '*The New World Order*', we have discussed that sin and evil did not exist before the creation of Jinn and Man. The Jinn might have been created much earlier than the human beings but the existence of Homo sapiens on Earth cannot be imagined beyond a million years in any case. According to The Bible, the creation of the world and the existence of man hardly exceed 6000 years while some other assessments take it to 10,000 years. The modern science has discarded all such presumptions. It is, however, obvious that there had been no existence of sin or evil

before the creation of the species who were bestowed with free will.

Only the Divine guidance in the Qur'ān explicitly asserts the purpose of the creation of man. To know the purpose of creation, therefore, we start with the following. God said:

I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.¹

This shows that all creatures including the Jinn and Men were created with the primary purpose of serving and worshipping the LORD. As regards humankind, the LORD created them with such attributes that were necessary for their test and trial on Earth. God says:

Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power; **He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed**: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;⁻²

Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, **in order to try him**: So We gave him (the gifts), of Hearing and Sight. We showed him the Way: **whether he be grateful or ungrateful** (rests on his will).³

(...) If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but **(His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues**. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute;⁴

God's revelations quoted above leave no doubt that humankind will have to pass through the ordeal to qualify for their entrance into the Garden of bliss. It has been clarified that:

And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle).⁵

Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so

¹ Al-Qur'ān 51:56 (Yusuf Ali).

² Al-Qur'an 67:1-2 (Yusuf Ali).

³ Al-Qur'an 76:2-3 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴ Al-Qur'an 5:48 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵ Al-Qur'an 47:31 (Yusuf Ali).

shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah?" Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!⁶

Or think ye that ye shall be abandoned, as though Allah did not know those among you who strive with might and main, and take none for friends and protectors except Allah, His Messenger, and the (community of) Believers? But Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.⁷

(for further details please refer to the chapter on *The Purpose of Creation* in our book '*The New World Order or Kingdom of God on Earth*').

It transpires from the above that though, like all other creatures, Man and Jinn too were created to serve the LORD yet they differed from them due to being subjected to test and trial by the Almighty. While all other creatures had been serving under compulsion of the LORD, humankind had been granted free will to choose from various options before them and to act independently in accordance with their own choice. The purpose of test and trial, therefore, entailed a separate guidance to them than programming or inbuilt guidance as provided to all other creatures of the LORD. They as such were obliged to use their free will as per guidance sent to them. The Lord had shown both the ways to them⁸ so that humankind may freely choose between the same. God certifies that:

By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;- Truly he succeeds that purifies it. And he fails that corrupts it!⁹

It was for the purpose of their test and trial that the Almighty created humankind with well-balanced propensities towards good and evil. Each member of the species was, therefore, individually responsible before the Lord to fulfill God's purpose of his test and trial on Earth.

⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:214 (Yusuf Ali).

⁷ Al-Qur'an 9:16 (Yusuf Ali).

⁸ Al-Qur'an 90:10.

⁹ Al-Qur'an 91:7-10 (Yusuf Ali).

Human openness towards sin and evil was the requirement of the test and trial of the species.

It is obvious from the above that endeavor of each person will be evaluated by the Lord for judgment after the end of respite on Earth. Those who obeyed the commandments of the Lord are promised with most pleasing rewards for their good deeds while the wrong-doers will be punished severely. **Instead of a wholesale deal the Almighty will be rewarding each individual in accordance with the efforts and actions made by him.** As regards faith, no prophet could ever introduce any change in the primary precepts stressing on absolute oneness of the Almighty. The Prophets had no power to change a tittle from the law of the Lord without specific revelation from the Almighty to affirm the same.

The followers of St. Paul must, therefore, note that he diverged from the teachings of all the Prophets including Jesus and his predecessors to preach Trinity instead of absolute unity of the Divine. God's verdict must remain unchanged for all times to come. He said:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (١) اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (٢) لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (٣) وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (٤)

1. say: He is Allah, the one and Only; 2. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; 3. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; 4. and there is none like unto Him.¹⁰

All this brings us to the conclusion that salvation depends entirely on faith, obedience and mercy as well as forgiveness of the one, eternal and the only Lord God of the universe. Any despair or disappointment from Him will be fatal for man. It is, therefore, useless to turn away from Him by inventing new gods or partners with the Lord to seek refuge from them.

¹⁰ Al-Qur'an Ch. 112.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND EVIL

Central Importance of Sin in Christianity

Although the problem of sin and evil had been posing challenges to all the faiths in the world, yet it had neither been the core issue nor starting point of their theology. No doubt Judaism started from the Creator and His creation and it also described human obligation under their covenant with the Lord yet gradually, **the Israelites started attaching prime importance to the chosen race than to the LORD**, His law or moral teachings of Torah. No doubt all Jews were declared as sons of God but the father continued to go into oblivion as compared to his illustrious sons i.e. the Israelites. Emphasis of importance, therefore, shifted from God and works under the Law to the chosen race and its welfare in the world. Even so, exclusive worship of one and the only God of the Israelites and welfare of the race had been the central points of the theology and politics of the Hebrews in the Old Testament and the national literature of the Israelites. As against them, St. Paul introduced sin as the starting theme, central point and foundation stone for the edifice of the theology developed by him in the name of Christianity.

Central theme with Buddhism was '*dukha*' (human misery) through recurring births extending over indefinite periods and almost unending process of regeneration in new forms. Incarnation into the highest forms, therefore, was the *Mukti* (salvation) as the ultimate goal of existence.

Jesus Christ had been a Jew sent as the last Prophet among the Israelites. Instead of introducing any new religion, he followed the law and teachings of Moses from his birth to crucifixion or ascension. He firmly believed that:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be

fulfilled.¹¹

Jesus neither abrogated even the smallest part of law given by Moses nor did he preach Trinity instead of strict monotheism of the Decalogue. Even in case of Sabbath, he purged the law from human additions made therein without impairing any part of the original commandments.

The earliest followers of Christ had started as a sect of the Jews with firm belief in the teachings of Torah and the Prophets. It was St. Paul a Jew and a Roman citizen who By interpreting various assertions in the Pentateuch and the prophets in diverse manner introduced an entirely different theology in which emphasis was shifted from worship and obedience of the Almighty to the sinfulness of Adam and Eve leading to death and degeneration of humankind with their utter helplessness to attain salvation without confessing Jesus Christ as the LORD and savior of mankind.

Original Sin of Adam and salvation through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus, therefore, became the central theme of Christianity.

While different faiths had their own variants about the origin, cause and impact of sin due to which they also suggested different solutions to the problem, the origin and universal existence of sin and evil had always been the primary and perhaps exclusive issue to be resolved by the Christians. A scholar has rightly observed that:

The Doctrine of Sin occupies an important and determinative position in the system of Christian Theology. It diagnoses the disease and defines the injury that leave man in need of the Christian redemption.¹²

The same scholar further observed that:

Doctrine of Sin (is) fundamental to the whole scheme of the Christian theology; it would regulate the conception of reconciliation and redemption and would, thus, influence the anthropological soteriological branches of theology (...) the conception of sin does seem fundamental at least to the redemptive element in the Christian religion and to the

¹¹ Mat 5:18 KJV.

¹² W. E. Orchard, D.D., *Modern Theories of Sin*, (London: James Clarke & Co., 1909), p. 1.

sotereological side of the Christian theology.¹³

Early Christian fathers were, therefore, so obsessed with the problem of sin that the knowledge about God, His attributes and human obligations towards Him were given secondary or tertiary importance as compared to tracing out the origin of sin and devising a once-for-all and wholesale remedy for the same. As such, instead of God and His attributes, the concept of Original Sin and its remedy attained the central importance in their theology. **While devoting most of their energies to discover and describe the Original Sin, the Christian fathers had no time to ponder the purpose of their creation and their individual and primary obligations to worship and obey the LORD.** Christian scholars, therefore, failed to develop god-consciousness and wholehearted allegiance to the Almighty.

The new theology introduced by St. Paul had discarded the entire law and teachings of Moses especially those contained in the Exodus and the Deuteronomy. The concept of inherited sinfulness was developed from scanty assertion in Gen 2:17 which the scholars today do not accept as revealed word of God. Modern scholars deny the authorship of Genesis by Moses. They term it as mythology based on other stories of creation and deluge prevailing in Babylonia and other ancient nations in the Middle East. Due to existence of mythological, self-contradictory and unscientific assertions in the Genesis, they do not accept it as infallible word of God.

We reiterate that instead of acquaintance with the LORD, His attributes and the purpose of the creation of humankind, sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden attained primary importance in the theology of the Christians. St. Paul had no concern whatsoever with the purpose of human creation and their obligations towards the Creator. He, therefore, did not stress on worshipping the Lord wholeheartedly or to seek forgiveness and salvation from

¹³ W. E. Orchard, D.D., *Modern Theories of Sin*, p. 1.

Him. His followers, too, devoted most of their time to ascertain the reason for existence of sin and evil in the world. Diverting from the teachings of the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ, **St. Paul suggested a new remedy to the collective sinfulness of humankind by suggesting Jesus Christ as the only begotten son of God, and saviour of humankind who through his vicarious sacrifice on the Roman cross had expiated all their sins.** Many patristic writers thereafter devoted their lives to speculate on the origin of Sin. Most of them followed the suggestions of St. Paul to impute the so called original sin to Adam and Eve. They held them responsible for causing defilement and degeneration in the self-supposed original perfection of nature according to which the Lord had created them.

St. Paul had professed that the death was wages of sin which entered into the world due to the original sin of Adam and Eve. The Christian fathers, therefore, broadly agree that due to seminal transmission from Adam, Sin and Death passed on to the succeeding generations of mankind. They, therefore, were doomed to live under captivity to sin and death. The said infection had defiled and debilitated them to do anything good to save themselves. Human beings had no recourse to get rid of the calamity except through the confession that Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of God who gave his life on the Roman Cross to expiate for the sins of mankind. He is supposed to have risen from the death on the third day which has been propagated as his triumph over sin and death. The risen LORD was, therefore, the only and the ultimate savior of mankind without whom, there could be no salvation, holiness and life everlasting. The concept, however, lacks any support from the revelations of the Lord or historical evidence on record.

Truth, however, remains that neither were Adam and Eve the fountainhead of sinfulness and death, nor inheritance of corrupt nature of humankind could be traced back to them. Inheritance of sinfulness from Adam and Eve and eternal condemnation inflicting death on humankind were, therefore, self-conceived concepts of St. Paul and his

followers. Such concepts were neither based on any revelation from the Almighty nor on the teachings of Moses and the prophets as his followers including Jesus Christ himself. Christian theory of Original Sin and Salvation, therefore, emanates entirely from speculations and reasoning of the Christian fathers than the word of God. The Christian fathers had themselves developed such concepts on the basis of certain Jewish writings current at the time of St. Paul and thereafter. Such man-made theories abound in numerous self-contradictory assumptions and confusions which could not be resolved during discussions extending from the death of St. Paul till today.

In contrast to the speculative discussions of the Christians, we observe that Islam is free from ambiguities, inconsistencies and paradoxes as we find in the Christian doctrines of sin and salvation. This is so because instead of speculation, the Muslims rely on accurately preserved revelations of the Lord which guide them to the straight path. Only the revelations in the Qur'ān provide humankind with a credible knowledge about the Lord, His attributes, the creation of the world and the purpose of creation of man. Muslims, therefore, have no confusion about the reasons of the existence of sin and evil in the world. To have a better understanding of the theme, the readers may also refer to our book titled '*The New World Order*'.

Sin Defined

In spite of hectic efforts of the earliest Christian fathers, they could never arrive at a consensus to determine what should be the content or connotation of the term 'sin'. Some of them described it as transgression of the Divine Law while others also referred to volitional and intentional breach of moral law. Strict moralists defined sin as deviation from absolute standard of moral perfection. Out of numerous definitions of Sin, therefore, we quote a few in the following:

Sin is the name given to moral evil, when regarded from the

point of view of religion, as distinguished from that of civic law or that of ethics.¹⁴

The problem seems to be incapable of solution to the theologians. For example Henry Van Dyke says that:

Man 'cannot find the perfect answer' to the question of how evil came into being, 'because his reason is limited and conditioned, and because his intellectual power itself has developed under the shadow, and within the sphere, of the very malign presence which he seeks to account for'. 'We can give no rational account of its origin (i.e. of evil), because its origin appears irrational.'¹⁵

We, therefore, agree with the problem faced by the scholar. The creator must, therefore, be accepted as all-knowing and all-wise as compared to man. Only the divinely revealed words can provide us true information about the same.

Many Christian writers broadly agree that sin is 'any thought, word, action, omission or desire, contrary to the law of God'. The term covers both the guilt and the punishment of sin.¹⁶ Sin can, therefore, be taken as "the breaking of Divine or moral law, esp. by a conscious act." Such an act or an offence against good taste or propriety is counted as sin which contrasts with the sinlessness, holiness or purity. In short any disobedience to the Divine command is a sin.

The definition of sin in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* is reproduced in the following:

The words used for sin have generally to do with human relations. The most commonly used root is *hattā'*, meaning to miss the mark (morally, to be deceived, fall short of the goal). In Sin the goal is a person, and hence it is a failing toward someone, a violation of the bond uniting persons to one another. Sin is therefore a personal failing as regards God, a failing of Him, a falling short of the mark God sets for us. The less frequent but more theological word *pesa* indicates

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, (Chicago: William Benton Publishers, 1966) 'sin' p. 702.

¹⁵ *Modern Theories of Sin*, p. 112.

¹⁶ *Cruden's Complete Concordance*, (London: Lutterworth Press, New & Revised Edition, 1941) 'Sin'

defiance toward God. It denotes a transgression, the violation of the rights of others, setting the rebellious sinners against God as it sets people one against another. It is a word reserved for Israel's sin.¹⁷ (...) Although *pesa'* does not occur as frequently as other terms, e.g. *hattā'*, it is the strongest word for sin and its meaning is adopted by the New Testament.¹⁸

While referring to the religions of Israel, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* records with reference to Paul Ricoeur¹⁹ that:

When, as in the Bible sin becomes a breach in the living relation with God, there is conversion of the positive to the negative. Sin is "the loss of bond, of root, of an ontological ground" counterbalanced by the positive "fundamental symbolism of the return." One has entered another world, but not one isolated from the rest of the universe.²⁰

Ben Sira²¹ was, perhaps, the person providing us with non-Biblical definition of Sin in the following:

Sin consists, according to him, in the breach of explicit law rather than in an inward disposition expressed by the aims and affections of the man. His recognition of the universality of sin, again, finds no deeper expression than that "all are worthy of punishment." Sin is not conceived as an inherent spiritual disease clinging to man from his birth; and it is scarcely regarded as an external power. Such moral solidarity' as he incidentally predicates of the race consists only in the punishableness of the children of their parents' sins, and in the influence of example. Ben Sira's attitude generally speaking is individualistic: and he magnifies personal freedom

¹⁷ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 2003) Vol. 13, 'Sin', p. 142.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 143.

¹⁹ Jean Paul Gustave Ricoeur (1913–2005) a French philosopher.

²⁰ *Encyclopedia of Religion*, editor in Chief; Lindsay Jones, 2nd Ed. (Farmington Hills, MI, Thomson Gale, USA, 2005), 'sin and guilt', Vol. 12, p. 8403.

²¹ (fl. 2nd century BCE) A Hellenistic Jewish scribe, sage, and allegorist from Jerusalem. He is the author of the Book of Sirach, also known as the Book of Ecclesiastics.

and responsibility.²²

Ben Sira was the precursor of the Talmudic teaching as to the Fall rather than that of the more serious pseudepigraphic literature of the first century A. D. Although he holds that sin entered into the world as an actuality in Eve's transgression, and also recognizes that all men are sinners (viii. 5) and are descended from Adam (xvii. 1), he nevertheless implies that **the Fall brought no moral incapacity in its train, no inherited corruption of nature, to diminish man's power of self-determination.**' If any excuse is offered from human depravity, it is that of our natural and essential frailty referred to in xvii. 30-32 and elsewhere; and its ultimate source, or rather its ground in so far as man's will is excepted, is God, not Adam's self-perversion.²³

Sin as Dark and Insoluble Mystery

The problematic and extremely pessimistic view of the Christians about sin is evident from the quotation from Mr. Aubrey Moore forming the opening words of the book '*Sin*' by H. V. S. ECK:

'The one dark, insoluble mystery of human life is sin; it is so impossible for us to explain it; **so futile to try and explain it away.** It is so terribly familiar, so utterly unintelligible.'²⁴

To inculcate the pessimism about human fate on the Earth and in the Hereafter, the Christian scholars have been presenting to their laymen a shuddering and aghast presence of the dark mystery of sin. The miserable life on earth and utter desperation about the future was highlighted to impress upon the Christians **the indispensability of a redeemer to save them.** Mary Daly observes that:

One of the chief obstacles to envisaging the Incarnation within an evolutionary context has been a literalist interpretation of

²² *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, (Cambridge: The University Press, C. J. Clay and Sons, 1903), p. 111.

²³ *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, p. 117.

²⁴ H. V. S. ECK, M.A., *Sin*, 2nd Ed. (London, New York, Bombay & Calcutta: Longman Green & Co. 1908) pg. 3

the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve.²⁵

Teilhard de Chardin, in '*Christologie et Evolution*', an article which appeared in 1933, wrote of this:

"Not only must history, in order to accept Adam and Eve, be strangled in quite artificial way, on the level of the appearance of man, but—in a more immediately vital area, that of belief—the expansion of our religion is constantly stifled by the present formulation of the doctrine of original sin. It clips the wings of our expectations and inexorably leads us back into the shadows of reparation and expiation."

Paul Tillich in his *Systematic Theology* called literal belief in the story of the Fall 'a distinct disservice to Christianity'.

It is not by accident that two such prophetic thinkers as Teilhard de Chardin and Paul Tillich focused attention upon Theological distortions connected with the story of the Fall. The effects of these distortions are far-reaching. As long as theology is obsessed with a conception of human nature as fallen from a state of original integrity, and considers that state to have actually existed in the past, it must be pessimistic about the present and the future. It tends to see human life chiefly in terms of reparation and expiation. As long as this is the atmosphere of theology, Christianity cannot fully recognize itself to be what theologian Karl Rahner called it: 'the religion of the absolute future'.

This static, sin-haunted view of human life reflects and perpetuates a negative attitude toward sexuality, matter, and 'the world'.²⁶

She further writes that:

The disease of sin-obsession and anti-sexuality has spread from the roots to the branches of theology.²⁷

The problem of sin had gained such paramount importance in the Christian theology that during last 2000 years, hundreds of thousands of pages had been devoted to explain the origin of sin and existence of evil in the world. Due to his Christian background, Mr. Aubrey Moore also tried to '**explain away**' the sin but failed to solve different

²⁵ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), p. 185.

²⁶ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), p. 185.

²⁷ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 186.

paradoxes in it. As such, the doctrine of salvation propounded by the Christian fathers had never been free from inherent defects.

Explaining Away the Sin

Christian debates and scholarly efforts prolonging over centuries together, failed to discover the root-cause of the sin and evil in the human world. The confusion or difficulty to discover the origin and remedy for sin had neither sprouted from the teachings of *Torah* nor from the teachings of the Prophets including John and Jesus. All perplexity had been caused by wrong interpretation of various assertions in the OT and metaphysical speculations of the earliest Christian fathers. Since the said study was based on misinterpretation of the scriptures, Christian fathers miserably failed to remove the paradoxes or contradictions in the man-made Doctrine of Sin and salvation. The net result could be nothing else than bewilderment and desperation of the theologians. Robert Briffault (1876-1948) aptly brought into focus the root cause of the desperation caused by the preference of human speculations over the revelations of the Lord in the O.T. He concluded that:

No system of human organization that is false in its very principle, in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that falsehood is carried out and maintained, by any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering. It is doomed root and branch as long as the root remains what it is.²⁸

Words of Robert Briffault quoted above perhaps imply that instead of theoretical assumptions of scholars and philosophers, **we need to turn to the Creator of the universe for His guidance to get out of the self-created riddles and problems of theology.** Only the accurately preserved words of God could be the credible source of acquaintance with the Lord and to know about the purpose of the creation including humankind and Jinn.

²⁸ Robert Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1919) p. 159.

Nothing except the Divine revelations can enable us to understand the **reason for existence of sin and evil in the world**. God's word alone could have saved us from all ambiguities and puzzles created by human speculation. Hence, after reviewing the Christian efforts to discover the origin and remedy of sin and evil, we shall be producing Islamic point of view in accordance with the Divine Revelations in the Qur'ān enabling the readers to arrive at the truth.

The OT did not contain a clear-cut concept of resurrection and individual accountability in the Hereafter. Sheol was a place of darkness to which all the dead go, both the righteous and the unrighteous. Although the *Torah* and the prophets contained stern warnings for the disbelievers and the wrong-doers yet all rewards or punishments pertained to human life on Earth. Land, power and welfare of the Israelites in the world had been guaranteed to them through allegiance to the LORD, keeping the covenant and obedience to all His commandments.

The LORD had sent thousands and thousands of His prophets towards the Israelites. Both John the Baptist and Jesus were sent as last warners to them. The OT had clearly warned them not to adopt the faiths and practices of other nations around them. Moses had strongly predicted about the advent of the promised prophet like unto himself from the brethren of the Israelites (i.e. from the Ishmaelites) as we find detailed in Deu. 18:9-21. Jesus too had predicted about the promised Prophet ﷺ but the translators seem to have interpreted Jesus in such manner that the true import of the prophecy stands concealed. Presently we find in the KJV that:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;²⁹

²⁹ Joh 14:16 KJV. This quotation shows Jesus in a position inferior to the Lord. It, therefore, conflicts with the Christian postulate about equality of Jesus with God. (W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology* - Article 1).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:³⁰

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.³¹

This shows that the followers of the prophets from Moses to Jesus had no justification to wait for any incarnate God either to guide them, to redeem them from the so-called Original Sin **or to restore the original nature of creation**. All diversions from the mainstream faith of the prophets were the handiwork of St. Paul and his followers. It was he who taught his followers that keeping the covenant diligently, **conscious efforts to refrain from sinfulness** and repentance as preached by John and Jesus Christ were no longer necessary preconditions for salvation. According to him, **salvation was based entirely on grace than the works under law**. Expiation of sin was suggested through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This shortcut and the easiest way to salvation, holiness and life-everlasting had great attraction for the new faith. Besides relieving the believers from unbearable burden of the Law of Moses, it also obviated the individual or personal responsibilities of the Christians for the actual sins committed by them. Mr. ECK, therefore, did not emphasize human responsibility to obey the commandments of the Lord or turning to Him repentantly in case of transgression. Like others he, too, concentrated more on explaining away the sin merely by speculation and arguments. Due to hollowness of the arguments, however, he could not get rid of the desperation as is evident from his confession in the following:

We cannot explain it away, and neither can we explain it. What it is, whence it comes, why it is permitted, we cannot say. Explanations there have been, but none fully accounts for

³⁰ Joh 15:26 KJV. Jesus here seems to enjoy authority greater than the spirit of truth termed as the Holy Ghost. This also contradicts the doctrine of co-eternity and co-equality between three persons in the God-head.

³¹ Joh 16:7 KJV.

it, or satisfies us wholly. And some, from the very earliest days of Christianity onwards, have been so staggered by this persistent and disquieting fact of the presence of evil, that they have even denied the goodness of God Himself and refused to worship Him, whilst others have borrowed for themselves wild and fantastic Oriental speculations and sought to embody them in the Faith of Christ.³²

Christian theologians, therefore, openly confess their failure to tackle with the problem of sin. Discussing the views of various philosophers on sin and evil, Mr. Tennant observed about Lotze as under:

The 'why' of the existence of evil is for him, as for other philosophers an insoluble difficulty which he does not profess to be able to remove.³³

Mr. Tennant further observes that:

We have seen that the problem of the origin and universality of sin, even on its empirical side, and apart from deeper metaphysical questions to which it leads, has been acknowledged by theologians and philosophers alike to present an incomprehensible enigma.³⁴

Mr. ECK also quoted from the bishop of Birmingham as under:

It is my persuasion, which deepens with every year of experience, that there will be no revival of vital religion among us, on any large scale, or with any adequate results, except through a deepening of the sense of sin: a return to the properly Christian severity of view about the meaning of sin and its consequences; and that this is needed equally in all classes of society and among all kinds of men.³⁵

We also note that the Torah, the Prophets and the pre-exilic literature of the Jews had no confusion about sin nor had it been an insoluble mystery for them. All contradictions, paradoxes and the perplexities in the Christian theory of sin and salvation had been the offshoots

³² H. V. S. ECK, M.A., *Sin*, p. 3, 4.

³³ F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin* (Cambridge: University Press, 1908) p. 67.

³⁴ F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p 79.

³⁵ H. V. S. ECK, M.A., *Sin*, on back of the Title Page.

of the doctrine of Original Sin based on erroneous interpretation of the story of paradise and the fall. While evolving the theory of salvation through atonement or **saving sacrifice of one man i.e. Jesus Christ**, it was St. Paul's necessity to contrast the holiness and sanctifying grace of Jesus with the perverted and criminal conduct of Adam causing utter depravity and desperation to humankind. Instead of a revealed truth, therefore, the attribution of sin to Adam and consequent helplessness of his progeny was an invention of St. Paul to establish indispensability of the redeemer in the form of Jesus Christ.

Infidelity towards the Almighty

Besides implicating Adam and Eve for the introduction of sin and death in their descendants, the Christian Theologians paint the Almighty as an unrelenting tyrant and a cruel judge unwilling or perhaps unable to remit the sins of Adam and his progeny without its expiation through blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb. This hyperbolic unremitting position of God against sin and evil, therefore, led many of the Christians to utter disappointment and even defection from the God of the Old Testament. Mr. Eck, therefore, records that:

And some, from the very earliest days of Christianity onwards, have been so staggered by this persistent and disquieting fact of the presence of evil, that they have **even denied the Goodness of God Himself and refused to worship Him**, whilst others have borrowed for themselves wild and fantastic Oriental speculations and sought to embody them in the Faith of Christ.³⁶

Inadequacy of Speculation

Christian scholars ignore the fact that only truly preserved revelations can reveal the mysteries about the spiritual world and the knowledge about the LORD. Ambiguities and perplexities abound only when we depend upon human speculations than the word of God. The riddle was introduced primarily by St. Paul's peculiar interpretation of

³⁶ H. V. S. ECK, M.A., *Sin*, pg. 4.

the narrative of the paradise and the fall as contained in Gen Ch. 2 and 3. He resorted to erroneous assumptions based merely on speculations about the purpose of creation of man, the supreme wisdom of the Lord for placing Adam and Eve in the Garden and the impact of their transgression on future status and conduct of man on Earth. Consequently the discrepancies could never be reconciled by the theologians. The doctrine contains such complications, misconceptions and ambiguities that in spite of hectic efforts during past two thousand years the Christian scholars have utterly failed to resolve the same. The so-called dark mystery about the origin and existence of sin and evil in the world, therefore, survives as an obscurity for the Christians till today. Same is evident from the observations of various eminent scholars and philosophers quoted above.

The inadequacy of human speculation as against Divine guidance is quite evident from the above. In spite of all ambiguities and conflicting concepts in the doctrines of sin and salvation, however, the Christian theology had a soothing effect on many Jews as well as the Gentiles. The new theology provided them relief from works under law and meticulous compliance with the prohibitions in the Torah. The doctrine of expiation of sin through saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ had such a fascinating appeal for them that they found it unnecessary to probe into its validity in the light of the Law of Moses or the teachings of Jesus Christ. The palatability of the doctrine of salvation was taken as the ultimate proof of truth by them. The Presence of various paradoxes in the doctrine of the church about sin and salvation could not, however, be overlooked by prudent thinkers among them. Many of the scholars continued to differ from the same. Doctrine of Original sin and Salvation approved by the Catholic Church, therefore, remains to be resolved for them. In his lecture III, Mr. Tennant conceded that:

Our previous study of the history of the problem of human sin, its origin and propagation, would perhaps at least serve to

show that the problem had **not yielded to the attempts at its solution made either from the side of theology or from that of philosophy.**³⁷

The seminal transmission of Original Sin from Adam to his descendants had always been causing bewilderment among the scientists and the philosophers. In spite of the fact that they tend to disagree with the reasons or scriptural evidence to trace the origin of sin yet finding no other satisfactory explanation of the existence of sin and evil in the world, they found no escape from acceptance of the doctrine. No wonder that, the famous French mathematician, physicist and religious philosopher, Blaise Pascal (1623-1662 A.D.) described the origin of sin as incomprehensible of the mysteries. He says:

It is very astonishing, that the mystery most remote from our knowledge, that, I mean, of the transmission of original sin, should be a thing without which we can possess no real knowledge of ourselves...Certainly nothing shocks us more than this doctrine, and yet without this most incomprehensible of all mysteries, we are an unintelligible enigma to ourselves. This is the master-key to the intricacies and perplexities of human existence. So that, however inconceivable this mystery may be, man, without it, is still more Inconceivable...For my self, I am free to declare, that as soon as I discovered in the Christian religion the doctrine that man is fallen and separated from God, I saw on every side indications of its truth."³⁸

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, too, had to admit in 1985 that:

The inability to understand "original sin" and to make it understandable is really one of the most difficult problems of present-day theology and pastoral ministry.³⁹

It can, therefore, be noted that the Christian failure to understand the origin of sin was caused primarily due to the disregard of the revelations in the Old Testament and secondarily due to their lack of concern to ascertain the

³⁷ F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p 78.

³⁸ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Footnote of p. 6.

³⁹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985) p. 79.

purpose of their creation. The said ignorance about the purpose of creation, therefore, deprived them from awareness about their obligations towards the Almighty. Mere speculation in the absence of revelation held them back from understanding God's purpose to introduce sin and evil in the world.

An excerpt from the *Life and Letters of Dean Church* may also be of some interest to the readers.

The fact of what is meant by original sin is as mysterious and inexplicable as the origin of evil, but it is obviously as much a fact. There is a fault and vice in the race, which, given time, as surely develops into actual sin, as our physical constitution, given at birth, does into sickness and physical death. It is of this inherited tendency to sin in our nature, looked upon in the abstract without reference to concrete cases, that I suppose the Article (ix.) speaks. How can we suppose that such a nature looks in God's eyes, according to the standard of perfect righteousness⁴⁰ which we also suppose to be God's standard and law? Does it satisfy that standard? Can He look with neutrality on its divergence from His perfect standard? What is His moral judgment of it as a subject for moral judgment?⁴¹

Mission of St. Paul

The Old Testament had bequeathed unbearable burden of Law on the Israelites. The rite of circumcision, dietary regulations and other mandatory rules of *Torah* were not acceptable to the Hellenist as well as pagan communities in the Roman Empire. *Torah* had no provisions to take the

⁴⁰ Man's creation in the likeness of God implies absolute perfection and righteousness in him. Christians, therefore, presuppose original creation of man with perfection like God or immunity from Sin in the likeness of Angels. They forget that from the very beginning, God had created Adam and Eve in the physical world i.e. the world of animals or other creatures **who were weak, mortal and imperfect**. They were created with sex, appetites, aspirations, lust for power and possessions which were unknown to the spiritual world of the angels. God had knowingly endowed them with such attributes only to test and try them on earth.

⁴¹ Mary C. Church, *Life and Letters of Dean Church* (London: MacMillan & Co. 1894), p. 248.

gentiles within the fold of the people of the covenant. Hence, in spite of the prolonged and continuous efforts of the Greco-Roman despots, they failed to attain uniformity of culture, creed and cohesion among the subjects of their Empires.

Alexander the Great had started the effort to attain cultural unity and solidarity among all the subjects of the Empire from about 330 BC. His successors continued to crush all the resistance from the Jews and other subjects against the Greek law, politics and culture by the force of arms but they failed to achieve any success in the same. Antiochus IV Epiphanes⁴² (r. 175-164 BC) had gone to the extremes to inflict torture and coercion on the Jews⁴³ so that they may relinquish their faith and identity as the Jewish community for their absolute absorption in the Greek society. Ultimately, the unbearable coercion of Antiochus IV infuriated the Jews to the extent that they resorted to rebellion against the Greeks which culminated in the overthrow of the Greek powers and establishment of Jewish independence under the Maccabians. The rebel warriors took control of Judea and founded the Hasmonean Dynasty, which ruled Judaea from 167 to 37 BCE. The Maccabians reasserted the Jewish religion and reduced the influence of Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism sponsored by the Greeks.

The Romans had keenly been observing the political environments of Judea during all this period. They had learnt the lesson that the Jewish resistance could not be brought to an end merely by use of power. No allegiance could be expected from them as long as they do not relinquish their faith in one and the only Lord God of the Universe whom alone they accepted as the king of Israel and the only lawgiver for them. The Roman authorities, therefore, found it expedient to adopt the strategy of striking at the foundations of the faiths of Israel. St. Paul or a school in his name was utilized as representative and

⁴² Epiphanes means '*God Manifest*'.

⁴³ For details about the 'Persecution of the Jews' and 'Humankind under the Greeks and the Romans' please refer to chapters 4 and 5 of the 1st Volume of our book '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*'.

spearhead of the new strategy aiming at introduction of universalism in the religion by amalgamation of the concepts of the Jews with the pagans, the idolaters, the mystery cults, the polytheists and mythological faiths of the Greco-Roman Culture of the Empire. It, therefore, had to be an all embracing and wide-spread religion than the one revealed by the Lord. This was the motive that the mainstream Christianity was named Roman Catholicism⁴⁴ than Christianity.

We know that Jesus intended to restore the kingdom of the Israelites and he had told his disciples that once the kingdom of God arrived, each disciple will get to rule one of the twelve tribes of the reconstituted Israel. His allergy towards the gentiles is apparent from the following:

5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: **6.** But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.⁴⁵

We also observe from the Jewish writings of the time that Yahweh had begun life with a decided ethnic bias in favor of the Israelites. As against this, the Roman state had already started to work towards ethnic harmony among their people. It championed tolerance towards diverse gods of diverse ethnicities. To synthesize the diverse ethnicities, therefore, St. Paul or a school in his name started inventing new theology which later on became known as Christianity. It was given a new start by inventing the concept of the Original Sin leading to death or mortality of humankind. It was argued that captivity to sin and death had debilitated

⁴⁴ The mainstream sect of the Christianity was known as Roman Catholics. It was taken from the Greek adjective '*katholikos*', the origin of the term "catholic", means "*universal*". Other meanings include wide-spread, all inclusive, broad-minded, unprejudiced, unbigoted, all-embracing etc. Roman Catholicism, therefore, highlights not only the universalism of faiths but also the preponderance of Roman culture and Creed on it. Christianity, therefore, is a misnomer for the universal religion propagated under the title of Christianity.

⁴⁵ Mat 10:5-6 KJV.

the human beings to such an extent that they could do nothing to get out of the mire. Nothing could save them from the utter despair wrought by the hands of Adam and Eve as progenitors of the humankind on Earth. Instead of presenting Jesus as an old fashioned prophet or a devout Jew, St. Paul chose to present him as a God son of God and ultimate savior of humankind who had given his life on the Roman cross to expiate the sins of humankind. Pretending himself to be an apostle of the Christ towards the gentiles, he himself extended the message and the blessings of the LORD to all the people including Israelites, gentiles and the polytheists throughout the world. For this, he had to compromise the faith of the prophets about absolute unity of God as per the Decalogue and to replace it with Trinity formed by God the father, Jesus the God son of God, and the Holy Ghost. He discarded the unbearable Law of Moses so that people may feel free from the dietary prohibitions and stringent laws of Torah.

A detailed study of the preachings of St. Paul exposes him as an agent of the Romans assigned with the task of eradicating the foundations of faith of the Israelites. Instead of promoting the revealed religion, therefore, he had to introduce a universal religion which could be palatable to all the people in and around the Roman Empire. Obviously the said purpose could not be served by presenting Jesus just as a prophet like other prophets of the Israelites. The Greco-Roman world did not acknowledge any prophets with revelations from the Lord. They on the other hand were more inclined to accept transition or transfiguration of human beings into a gods or a spirit. Deification of the emperors or great heroes had been common among them. Deification of Caesars like Julius, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian and Titus was a norm for them. They, therefore, had no objection to incarnation of Jesus into a God.

The concept of the absolute unity of the Almighty or human prophets sent by Him was unknown to the Hellenists. To synthesize Hellenism with the revealed religions, therefore, St. Paul had to adopt an authoritative posture so that he

could set aside the Law of Moses and teachings of the Prophets not conforming to the theology invented by him. Romans were unlikely to obey any human being as a prophet. The deification of Human being was, however, acceptable to them. It was to this purpose that St. Paul had to develop the concept of Jesus Christ as incarnate God and savior of humankind. The new religion i.e. Christianity, therefore, has little of the revelations as compared to human speculations and logic presented under the highly developed terminology of the Jewish faith. It was, therefore, due to collaboration of the Roman authorities and the school ascribed to St. Paul they succeeded to obliterate the Kingdom of Israel and the law of the Lord to make way for the kingdom of Rome on the lands under their control. They, therefore, eliminated all Jewish elements from the faith of the early Christians.

St. Paul himself was a man of flesh and bones but he never saw Jesus in flesh. He, therefore, had to condemn eyewitness principle or strict historical verification of the facts. His followers needed to believe him and depend on his assurance that dying and rising gods of pagan mystery cults were a reality than a myth. In spite of the fact the mother church at Jerusalem had been following a part of the Israelites community St. Paul had to preach that genuine apostles and disciples of Jesus had no supremacy over him. He claimed to have seen Jesus in spirit which according to him was a superior form of revelation than the discourses of revelations received by ordinary people during their lives in flesh.

ORIGINAL SIN

Original Sin; a Christian Invention

In the previous chapter, we acquainted ourselves with the generalized Christian concepts defining sin and evil. In the present one, we shall be reviewing their efforts to formulate the doctrine of Original Sin. Starting from St. Paul and his earliest followers, the Christian fathers continued to develop the doctrine up to the first quarter of the 5th Century A.D. Although St. Augustine had succeeded to present the Doctrine in an acceptable form yet the Christians cannot quote anything from the Old Testament or from the words of Jesus Christ to support their views about the origin of sin. Factually, the term '*original sin*' had been coined by the Christian fathers themselves and the same had been unknown to the prophets including Moses, John and Jesus Christ. In spite of this, the so-called sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden has been taken as a central theme in Christianity because it serves as foundation for the indispensability of the redeemer in the form of Jesus Christ. Christian fathers had, therefore, been trying to excel each other to prove and magnify the Original Sin of Adam and Eve which deprived them of their immortality. It was due to their transgression that they earned death as wages of sin. Consequently, degeneration, devastation and and desperation was the fate of their descendants on Earth. They had become utterly helpless to save themselves. The only ray of hope to get rid of the darkness of despair as suggested by them was through confession about Jesus as (a new God) son of God and ultimate savior of humankind.

Factually, the Christian fathers had been making concerted efforts to formulate the doctrine of Original Sin for centuries together. Ultimately, it was during the first quarter of the 5th century AD that St. Augustine gave it the form acceptable to the majority of the masses in the West. In spite of the prolonged efforts of the Christian fathers, we

find no unanimity among them to define the term. We, therefore, find a vast variety of the descriptions elaborating the concept. Among them are the following:

Original Sin, as an act, the sin of mankind's first parent. Besides its immediate effects, Adam's sin had, according to Christian theology, general consequences for all his descendants, who, because of it, lost original justice and were subjected to suffering and death. This doctrine of a sin passing from Adam to all men is based on the narrative of Genesis, the other references to it in the Old Testament (e.g., in Wisdom⁴⁶ 2, 24), and on the interpretation given these texts by St. Paul, especially in Rom. 5, 12-21. Paul's purpose in this section of his epistle is to show the universality and efficacy and redemption of mankind as accomplished by Christ. He does this by a comparison between Adam, the head of sinful humanity and Christ, the sinless second Adam, who is the head of restored humanity. The first Adam founded the kingdom of sin and death; the second, that of grace and life: "Through one man sin entered the world and through sin death."⁴⁷

According to the Roman Church:

Original sin is, or results from, the loss of original righteousness, which did not belong to man's *nature* but was a supernatural addition to it, a *donum superadditum*.⁴⁸

Christian fathers, therefore, believe that original sin was the loss of original righteousness. **They also suffer from the misconception that Adam had the capability to change the nature of his creation.** It was believed that

⁴⁶ The book of Wisdom generally dated to the 2nd century BCE is one of the seven Sapiential or wisdom books included within the *Septuagint*, along with *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Song of Songs* (*Song of Solomon*), *Job*, and *Sirach*, and is included in the canon of Deuterocanonical books by the Roman Catholic Church. 2:24 of the book contains that: "*Death came into the world only through the Devil's envy, as those who belong to him find to their cost*". The readers will observe that this reference lends no support to the Christian concept of original sin or its attribution to Adam and Eve.

⁴⁷ *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Ed. By Lauren S. Bahr and Bernard Johnston, Vol 18 (New York: Macmillan Educational Company, 866 Third Avenue, 1992) s.v. 'Original Sin', pg. 223.

⁴⁸ F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1908), Footnote of p. 155.

concupiscence belongs to man's nature and Original Sin can be transmitted biologically to one's descendants. The Basilians⁴⁹ confession has it that:

Through Adam's fall the entire human race is corrupted and subject to condemnation; our nature has been weakened, and affected with such a bias to sin that, unless the Spirit of God restores it, man of himself can do nothing good.⁵⁰

It implies that Adam had the capability only to corrupt his nature but the corruption could not be rectified without involvement of the spirit of God. We, however, observe that no such concept can be traced either in the OT or teachings of Jesus Christ. The same also transpires from the doctrine of the Anglican Church about the consequences of the fall upon human nature as contained in Article IX:

Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature (vitium et depravatio naturae) of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the **flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit**,⁵¹ and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *ῥόσημα σαρκός* which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."⁵²

This article is reticent in comparison with most other

⁴⁹ Basilians are the monks who follow the "Rule" of Saint Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea (330-379).

⁵⁰ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Footnote of p. 161.

⁵¹ It is pertinent to note that the man had been created with the complexity of nature by putting together flesh and the spirit. In case we bifurcate man into flesh and spirit, it is no longer the man we discuss. Flesh without spirit or spirit without flesh cannot be taken as man. Hence, it is meaningless to condemn flesh or to elevate spirit in isolation from each other.

⁵² *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, pg. 154-155.

confessions on the subject. But it definitely, lays down that man is displeasing to God because of his possessing a hereditary bias to evil, or a corruption of nature, which is identified with the animal propensities or 'concupiscence'; and this concupiscence' is definitely asserted to be 'of the nature of sin' in the strict sense of 'deserving God's wrath.' No mention is made of a loss of supernatural endowments, of deprivation of grace or of the presence of the Spirit.⁵³

The Confession of the Westminster about the Original Sin may also be of much interest to the readers:

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God,⁵⁴ and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.⁵⁵

Luther defined the Original Sin as:

...an intimate, most hurtful, most profound, inscrutable and ineffable corruption of human nature as a whole and in all of its powers.⁵⁶

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) rejected the view of Luther as an exaggeration but they too affirmed that Adam: *"being defiled by the sin of disobedience has transfused not only death and pains of the body into the whole human race but sin also, which is the death of the soul".*⁵⁷

While discussing the sources of the doctrine of original sin, Mr. F. R. Tennant observed that:

⁵³ Ibid, pg. 155.

⁵⁴ There is no scriptural proof for human fall from the so called original righteousness and communion with God. The discussion is based on futile assumptions instead of the word of God. Actually it was after confession of his guilt and forgiveness from the Almighty that Adam was elevated as the first prophet of the Lord on Earth. He, therefore, was endowed with more supernatural grace than before.

⁵⁵ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Footnote of p. 162.

⁵⁶ *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Vol 18, s.v. 'Original Sin', pg. 223.

⁵⁷ *ibid*.

S. Paul alone, amongst the first generation of Christian teachers, refers to the original entrance of sin into the human world, and connects, in any way, the sinfulness of the race with the first transgression.⁵⁸

St. Paul was, therefore, the first person to argue that due to transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden, sin entered the world along with death as wages of sin. Death made its way to all men because all sinned.⁵⁹ It is worth noting here that St. Paul was not the sole inventor of the concept of Original Sin. Similar ideas already prevailed in the Jewish writings at the time of St. Paul. We shall, therefore, be examining the same in the forthcoming discussions in some detail. It, however, may be kept in mind that unlike the Christians, Jewish writers were not unanimous to impute sinfulness of mankind or death as wages of sin to our first parents. They also did not blame Adam and Eve for introducing corruption in the original nature of creation. **Many among them continued to believe that each individual was responsible for his own ruin.**

It is certainly the case that, in some of the apocalyptic books approximately contemporaneous with the writings of S. Paul, we meet with the assertion that death was decreed against the race because of Adam's sin, and side by side with this the (apparently) conflicting statement that each individual is responsible for his own ruin, or, as Pseudo-Baruch expresses it, that every man is "the Adam of his own soul." We know, moreover, that it was not uncommon for Rabbis to place two antithetical propositions, such as affirmations of predestination and free will, side by side without reconciliation, as the effective solution of the whole problem.⁶⁰

Baseless Blemish on Adam

Followers of St. Paul embraced the view that all descendants of Adam had inherited the degenerated nature

⁵⁸ *The Sources of The Doctrines of The Fall & Original Sin*, p. 249.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, p. 255.

⁶⁰ *The Sources of The Doctrines of The Fall & Original Sin*, (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1903) p. 258-59.

from him and being infected by sin, they stood debilitated to get rid of the same by their own efforts. It was, therefore, due to the inequity of one man i.e. Adam, that sin and death entered the world and the same was inherited by all his descendants. **Adam was, therefore, responsible for the wreck and ruin of his posterity.**

Due to sin in the Garden, Adam had lost the sanctifying grace of the LORD. He was no longer just and holy, nor was he God's child and an heir to heaven⁶¹ as he ought to have been according to God's plan.⁶² **Consequently, his soul was ugly and foul in God's eyes making him spiritually dead.** That was the sinful state of condition of Adam's soul after his sinful act. It was this sinful state of soul that passed on to every child of Adam.⁶³ The deadly poison of sin had entered into Adam's soul by his act of disobedience to God which passed into every child born into the world from Adam. The sin⁶⁴ is called original because it comes down to us through our origin or descent from Adam. We call this the 'sin of human nature' or 'the hereditary sin'.

⁶¹ The presumption that Adam had lost the sanctifying grace of the LORD due to his sin in the garden due to which he was no longer just and holy to be God's child and heir to heaven, is neither based on the word of God nor on the teachings of Jesus Christ. In the absence of a revelation from the LORD, St. Paul or his followers had no authority to make such a declaration on their own. To attribute sin, defilement or degradation to Adam and his descendants was a great misconception of st. Paul. God himself had certified having bestowed great honor on Adam and his progeny (Al-Qur'ān 17:70, 95:4), St. Paul and his followers have, therefore, wrongly vilified Adam who was the exalted vice-gerent and first prophet of the LORD on Earth. Thousands and thousands of prophets including Jesus Christ were among his descendants.

⁶² To assert that something can prevent God from accomplishment of His will is tantamount to blasphemy against Him. Things cannot be else than God intended they should be. Adam, therefore, had no power to thwart any plan of the Lord.

⁶³ The Christians commit gross error in believing that soul of Adam had become ugly and foul and he passed the same state of soul to his children. Had it been correct, no prophets could have been raised from his descendants.

⁶⁴ Readers may kindly note that the Old Testament or credible preachings of Jesus Christ lend no support to such a creed.

As against denunciation of Adam and Eve by the Christians, the Lord God in fact affirms that He honored Adam and his progeny over most of His creatures.⁶⁵ **Adam's lapse during his probation in the garden was forgiven by the LORD there and then.** Subsequent to his seeking forgiveness and protection from the LORD, he was placed on earth as vicegerent and the first prophet of the LORD. After passing out from the academy, therefore, Adam and Eve committed no transgression during their actual career on earth. Hence, instead of bringing any depravity or degeneration on his descendants, **Adam had bequeathed a noble heritage to humankind.** Thousands and thousands of prophets including Seth, Noah, Hud, Swaleh, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad ﷺ were raised from the progeny of Adam and Eve. **This leaves no room to assume that humankind had inherited any defilement or degeneration of nature from their first parents.**

Explaining the Original Sin, Rev. Joseph J. Baierl writes that:

After Adam's sin the eyes of man's mind, the understanding, lost their brightness and keen power. Darkness descended on man's heart. Gradually, they forgot the one true God. They could not always distinguish clearly between good and evil. Therefore, it is not surprising that they began to fall into idolatry and other most shameful sins. So ignorant did they become that they imagined these offenses would please their false gods. The great knowledge⁶⁶ which God had bestowed on

⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an 17:70.

⁶⁶ We fail to know the source of Rev. J. J. Baierl's assumption that **God had bestowed great knowledge on Adam.** It conflicts with Genesis' narrative of Adam's transgression in the Garden e.g.

Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. He told him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day." (Gen 2:15-17 GNB). This shows that instead of dying on the same day, eating from the tree from the tree of knowledge elevated Adam to new heights than to cause any defilement or degeneration in his nature of creation. The same is evident from the following:

Adam and which was to pass to his children was gone. By their disobedience our first parents plunged the whole human race into ignorance.⁶⁷

Rev. Baierl further asserted that:

The human race, similarly, is infected with poison of Adam's sin to its very roots (...) Now you can understand why we call the transgression of Adam *original sin*. ***This sin is called original because it comes down to us through our origin, or descent from Adam.*** (...) We call this sin also "the sin of human nature" because it is attached to human nature from birth. It is our heritage from Adam; therefore, it is also called the hereditary sin.⁶⁸

In spite of the fact that no prophet of the Lord ever preached such a faith, the doctrine of Original Sin rapidly gained popularity in the West only because it suggested easiest way to redemption through Christ. According to St. Paul, it was one man, Adam who caused degeneration in the perfect nature of all his descendants. Since death was the wages of sin, therefore, all the descendants of Adam and Eve inherited the degradation in their nature and became captive to sin and death. As such, according to the Christians, every new-born child comes to the world with a taint of sin on him or her, with the only exceptions of Jesus Christ (the Lord) and Virgin Mary the immaculate mother of God. Since mankind could do nothing to get out of the calamity, therefore, the Lord God took pity on them and sent His only begotten son to the earth to atone for the sin of humankind. Jesus Christ, the incarnate son of God was, therefore, suggested as antitype of Adam to take on him the entire sins of humankind to be expiated through his death on the Roman Cross. He died as a man but on the third day he rose from death as the risen Lord and ultimate

Then the LORD God said, "Now these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever." (Gen 3:22 GNB).

In view of the Above, we cannot agree with J. J. Baierl that disobedience of our first parents plunged the whole race into ignorance.

⁶⁷ *The Creed Explained*, p. 212.

⁶⁸ *The Creed Explained*, p. 215-216.

savior of humankind. As such, Jesus Christ vouchsafed holiness, salvation and life everlasting to the Christians.

The presumption that Adam resembled God or gods at the time of his creation implied that he enjoyed perfection of nature like Gods. The Qur'ān repudiates the concept by asserting that:

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا . يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

And Allah would turn to you in mercy; but those who follow vain desires would have you go tremendously astray. Allah would make the burden light for you, **for man was created weak.**⁶⁹

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ.

Verily We have **created man into toil and struggle.**⁷⁰

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا
وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ,

It is Allah Who **created you in a state of (helpless) weakness**, then gave (you) strength after weakness, then, after strength, gave (you) weakness and a hoary head: He creates as He wills, and it is He Who has all knowledge and power.⁷¹

Since man had been created in weakness and he had to pass through wavering conditions thereafter, it is incorrect to assume that the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden had deprived them of the original perfection of nature. No action of man could ever change the original nature of his creation. It is also baseless to assume that death was inflicted on mankind as the wages of sin. Had the assumption any truth in it, the death would have absolved all human beings from accountability before the Lord on the Day of Judgment.

⁶⁹ Al-Qur'ān 4:27-28, (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

⁷⁰ Al-Qur'ān 90:4, (Yusuf Ali).

⁷¹ Al-Qur'ān 30:54, (Yusuf Ali).

The Christian doctrine of Original Sin, suggests overall sinfulness of humankind which leaves no room for righteous conduct of any person on earth. Since the righteousness is antithesis of the doctrine, therefore, the Christians take pains to accuse even the most exalted prophets of the LORD like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac Jacob, Moses, Aaron and David etc. This is so because only the inheritance of moral depravity and death from Adam and Eve can serve as the foundation for the Christian theory of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Solidarity of Race in Adam

We noted earlier that the doctrine of Original Sin was neither traceable in the Old Testament nor in the Gospels. The concept of Original Sin was developed and propagated by St. Paul and his followers only to highlight the indispensability of Christ to redeem mankind from the disaster caused by the sinfulness of Adam and his progeny. Two of the South African theologians, therefore, observed that the Doctrine of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth "reflect a pre-modern world-view which should be regarded as outdated". One of them records that:

"I hope to have proven that they are mere human constructs. Both doctrines are classic examples of "eisogesis"⁷², "the skill of reading out of a text the interest we read into it" (Hoffmann 1993:241). Genesis 2-3, Psalms 51:7 and Romans 5:12-21 are not concerned with "original sin", while Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38 were not written to prove that Jesus was the eternal Son of God, or that the "virgin conception" saved him from carrying a "tainted" nature."⁷³

Earlier to that the writer had said that:

We may conclude from the above arguments that **Genesis 2:4b-3:24 is not a narrative about original sin and death as punishment**; nor is David bewailing his "fallen nature" in Psalms 51:7, or Paul arguing a case in Romans 5:12-21 **that**

⁷² Eisogesis means "The art of reading your presuppositions in the Bible.

⁷³ *The Doctrines of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth: Divine Revelation or Human Construct.* by I J J Spangenberg, (University of South Africa), p. 239.

Jesus could act as Saviour because He was born without original sin. Although there are theologians who continue to argue a case for original sin as if it were a “biblical doctrine” (Theron 2005:576-586) increasingly more biblical scholars are arguing that it is nowhere to be found in scripture.⁷⁴

As said earlier, St. Paul had derived the idea from the uncanonical literature and Jewish speculations of the age preceding him. It was presumed that transgression of Adam and Eve defiled not only the nature of their own creation but the infection got transmitted through seminal fluid to all their descendants causing such continuing degeneration and debility in them so that they were unable to do anything good to save themselves. It was further argued that human beings had an organic unity in Adam. By descent from a common origin, therefore, all human beings were born as captives to sin and death.

Relying on Genesis (1:26-27), the early Christian fathers professed that due to their creation in the likeness of God, Adam and Eve enjoyed perfection of nature which stood destroyed due to the sin committed by them. **St. Paul suggested integrity of mankind in one man i.e. Adam.** His detailed argument about sinfulness of Adam, embodiment of race in him and salvation of mankind by unification with Christ to avail the abiding grace through him has been quoted earlier.⁷⁵ Subsequently, Irenaeus taught that:

Further, inasmuch as the Recapitulation doctrine implies that **Christ is the sum and representative of restored humanity**, analogy requires that Adam should have similarly been the type and totality of mankind. This again was actually the teaching of Irenaeus; and in its development he was doubtless aided by the Pauline doctrine of the solidarity of the race in Adam. **Adam is frequently identified with the race and the race with him.** We sinned against God in Adam and

⁷⁴ Ibid p. 233.

⁷⁵ Rom 15:12-21.

through Eve, the whole humanity became liable to death.⁷⁶

Similarly, Athanasius (296/8-373 AD) too had been endorsing the opinion of St. Paul as quoted below:

Athanasius often speaks as if Adam were, in some sense, the sum of all men: "we all die in Adam" (...) And once or twice he seems to have expressed this solidarity in terms of the conception of the race's potential inclusion in Adam, the first parent of the race being, as it were, the seed inclosing the race in embryo.⁷⁷

It was ingenuity of St. Paul to suggest utmost condensation of sinfulness in Adam inflicting death and degeneration on him and ultimately its transmission among the human race constantly. To counteract the malady, he suggested Jesus Christ as the supernatural remedy. According to him, Jesus the only begotten son of God came down in human form and gave his life to eliminate evil influences of Adam's sin.

F. R. Tennant quotes Clement of Alexandria that:

Man, that had been free by reason of simplicity, was found fettered to sins. **The LORD then wished to release him from his bonds,**⁷⁸ and clothing Himself with flesh—O divine mystery! – vanquished the serpent, and enslaved the tyrant death; and, most marvelous of all, man that had been deceived by pleasure, and bound fast to corruption, had his hands unloosed, and was set free, O mystic wonder! **The LORD was laid low, and man rose up;** and he that fell from Paradise receives as the reward of obedience something greater [than Paradise]— namely heaven itself.⁷⁹

Look how our great saints of the Old have been deceiving us during the last 2000 years.

Although the concept of solidarity or integrity of race in Adam and degeneration of all his descendants due to the

⁷⁶ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 288-289.

⁷⁷ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 314.

⁷⁸ We know that Jesus had been the last warner of the Lord among the Israelites. No prophet except Muhammad ﷺ came after him. Since numerous nations and prophets of the Lord had already passed away, the Christian fathers were too late to suggest the remedy of releasing the bond through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

⁷⁹ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 293-294.

so-called Original Sin had been a controversial issue among the Christians yet it was accorded wide acceptance by the masses only because it served as a foundation for the Christian theology of redemption through Christ. F. R. Tennant, therefore, observes that:

We shall presently see reason to believe that, very possibly, such a doctrine of the fall as post-exilic Jewish Theology came to acquire was arrived at independently of the narrative of Gen. ii – iii., and, instead of being deduced from those chapters, was read back into them. But the presupposition of a fall-doctrine, i.e. a doctrine affirming the moral state and capacities of every individual to have been affected by a corruption of the nature which he inherits from his first parent, is certainly not logically a requisite for a deep sense of sin, or for a belief in the empirical universality of sinfulness amongst mankind.⁸⁰

As such, we find neither any revelation nor a reasonable ground to assume solidarity of the race in Adam.

Death and Sinfulness as Legacy of Adam

The presumption that death was wages of sin or Adam had become mortal only due to his sin is not based on some revelation from the LORD. James Barr for example said that:

The thought that all death, at all times and in all circumstances, is due to a primeval fault is difficult to take seriously, and all the more so when we perceive that Old Testament scripture by no means supports this idea. Similarly, the belief that God really, on the ground of a fault committed by two humans in the beginning of the world, ordained death as a destiny for all later humanity, throughout history, has truly staggering effects on the idea of God.⁸¹

From the very beginning, man had been created as a mortal being. Each individual had been destined to die after the respite predetermined by the LORD irrespective of the

⁸⁰ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 94

⁸¹ *The Doctrines of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth: Divine Revelation or Human Construct*. by I J J Spangenberg, (University of South Africa), p. 233.

fact that he committed a sin or not. Adam's sin, therefore, had no effect on the lifespan of man. Similarly, **the concept of degeneration or defilement of human nature and its regeneration or restoration in the Christians could nowhere be discerned in the actual history of the world.** We, therefore, fail to observe it as a material reality on Earth. St. Paul's discussion pertains to a mystical and metaphysical sphere which does not yield to verification or scrutiny in the physical world. Mr. Tennant, therefore, observes that:

These relations, especially the two just specified (that of unregenerate humanity to Adam, and of spiritual humanity to Christ), may be termed *mystical* in the sense of being unique, vital and inscrutable; they are real in the sense that sinful humanity is conceived as being actually present and participant in Adam's sin (...) S. Paul identifies that race, as sinners, with Adam in the same sense that he identifies the believer with Christ. "the moral defilement of man is *represented* as contracted in and with the sin of Adam (...) he rather means that all sinned in Adam in the same sense that he speaks of believers as being crucified to the world, and having died to sin, when Christ died upon the Cross.⁸²

Dying to sin as per Christian Creed is merely a matter of belief than a physical reality than can be observed on earth. Death to sin, therefore, could nowhere be discerned in the actual conduct of the Christian converts. In spite of dying to sinfulness, as professed by St. Paul, many of them continue to commit heinous crimes. This shows that St. Paul's suggestion about the solidarity of Christians with Christ was just an assumption than a ground reality. If confession by mouth, that Jesus was the LORD and ultimate savior of mankind was the sure way towards salvation, why similar confession about LORD the father could be of no avail to the believers? It has nowhere been explained. Comments about the same may be of much interest to the readers:

Yet another theory of original sin which has been attributed to S. Paul remains to be mentioned. He has been taken to imply

⁸² F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 262-263.

that all Adam's race have been "constituted sinners" by imputation; that they have passed into a judicial relation with God such as may be called a state of condemnation. The mediating fact between Adam's sin and all men being sinners would in this case simply be God's appointment.

The Injustice attributed to the Almighty by such a view appears, at first sight, to be somewhat mitigated in the kindred 'federal' theory, according to which mankind is involved in the punishment of Adam because he was their representative in a covenant relation with God. In other words, men sinned in Adam not pre-natally, or as potentially contained in him, but in a representative or putative⁸³ manner. They are regarded and treated by God as sinners because the act of Adam, as representative of the race, bound them also. If S. Paul intended his argument to carry this implication, we should then find the nearest parallel to his meaning in the passage before us in 2 Cor. V. 14, "one died for all, there all died," interpreted in terms of the same literalism which lies at the root of the federal theology; or else in the arbitrary visitation of parents' sin upon their children.⁸⁴

We, however, observe that the Creator provided individuality and personality to each and every person in the world and everyone among humankind enjoys the freedom to choose between various options and to act independently. We, therefore, find a wide variety of responses and actions of the individuals throughout the ages. As such, there is no reason to think of their solidarity either in Adam or their union in the Christ. Each one is liable to account for his own deeds. **There is no revelation from the Lord to suggest the consolidation of mankind in Adam as conceived by St. Paul.** F. R. Tennant has, therefore, observed that doctrines such as corruption of human race and hereditary transmission of its sinful bias have not been contained in the paradise story in the Genesis. The Israelites never knew about such a dogma:

The argumentum e silentio is indeed always precarious; but so

⁸³ Putative means supposed, alleged, assumed, presumed, Generally considered or reputed to be.

⁸⁴ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 365.

far as we know, no authentic instance has been found of the occurrence, in Jewish literature at all near to the age of S. Paul, of the conception that Adam constituted the whole race, or that the race potentially existed in him, and sinned in and with him.⁸⁵

In her remarks concluding the discussion about the conflict between Augustine and Pelagius, Tatha Wiley observes that:

Augustine's conception of an inherited sin provided a principle explaining human solidarity in sin with Adam. This principle is the core element of the classical doctrine of original sin.. **Like Paul, Augustine's primary interest was with Christ, not Adam.** While his assumption of original sin shaped his conceptions of redemption, grace, baptism, and the church, **Augustine's starting premise was the necessity of Christ's redemption for all humankind, not original sin.**⁸⁶

St. Paul had contrasted Adam's ruination of human nature with Jesus Christ's redemptive work showing him sum and representative of the restored humanity. It will, therefore, be useful to go through the scholarly comments on the same:

Further, inasmuch as the Recapitulation doctrine implies that Christ is the sum and representative of restored humanity, analogy requires that Adam should have similarly been the type and totality of mankind. This again was actually the teaching of Irenaeus; and in its development he was doubtless aided by the Pauline doctrine of the solidarity of the race in Adam. Adam is frequently identified with the race and the race with him. We sinned against God in Adam and through Eve the whole humanity became liable to death.⁸⁷

The Christian theology pretends that the Original Sin of Adam had caused not only death but also spiritual and moral depravity to his descendants so that they were unable to do anything good. The said degeneration, however, seems to have confined to the spiritual and moral aspects of the human life on earth. Material aspects of human life, however, remained intact from the infection

⁸⁵ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 260.

⁸⁶ Talha Wiley, *Original Sin*, p. 73-74.

⁸⁷ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 288-289.

caused by the sin of Adam. This implies that only material side of human efforts was free from the degeneration referred to above. No corruption of nature or debility inherited from Adam and Eve could hinder their way. It was, therefore, in the material aspect that humankind continued to enjoy perfect freedom to choose and to act during their lives on earth and to be recompensed in accordance with their own efforts. As regards morality or spirituality, the same had been ruined by the sin of Adam and Eve debilitating their descendants from doing anything good for their salvation. Only the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ and forgiveness to be granted by the church could save them from the afore-stated ruin. After surrendering all His powers to Jesus Christ and through him to the church, the Old God of Torah had no role to play in the punishment or forgiveness of sins. The church instead of the Almighty, therefore, wields the authority to ensure entrance of the believers into the paradise. It was due to the same reason that during the Crusades, the church granted innumerable indulgences to the Christians besides allotting specific plots or sectors of the paradise to those who could pay for the same.

The new theology devised by the Christians flourished primarily in the background of a pessimistic view about the fate of humankind. Due to original corruption of nature, mankind stood utterly indisposed and disabled to do good deeds. They, therefore, did not spare even the most exalted prophets, the saints and martyrs who lived on Earth righteously. Condemnation of all human beings as sinners was the necessity for the mediation by the Christ. It was the requirement of the new theory of salvation propounded by St. Paul and his followers that all humanity must be dubbed as sinful and corrupt with the only exception of Jesus Christ, the God son of God and the ultimate savior of the Christians. If this is the truth, salvation will be denied to all human beings who died before the advent of Jesus Christ. Similarly, salvation through Jesus Christ will remain limited to a small percentage of humankind who confessed

his divinity and salvation through him as per doctrines of the Christian Church. The secular majority in the Christian world, therefore, has no hope to be saved.

Vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus

Although the concept was quite intriguing for the Christians, yet we observe that the blood sacrifice of the supreme being i.e. Divine Jesus, had gone waste being insufficient to restore the so-called original perfection in the nature of man destroyed by the incidental lapse of Adam, the humble and the mortal creature of the Divine. Even so the vicarious blood sacrifice of God, Son of God restored nothing of the self-presumed original perfection in the nature of His creatures. As against this, the Qur'an has emphatically denied the sacrifice or crucifixion of Jesus Christ by Jews or others. It was revealed:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah";- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.⁸⁸

We, therefore, hope that a comparative study of the narratives of sacrifice in the four Gospels will reveal not only the irreconcilable contradictions between the Gospels but also the confusion about the person crucified and his motive for the same. All narratives depict Jesus Christ as a hero among the peoples of his nation gathering people around him to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Obviously the Roman governor had to crucify him as an insurrectionist against the Roman Empire. Gospel authors are inconsistent in describing what actually happened. Although crucifixion had been the central event in the passion narrative yet the evangelists do not agree on it. Most of them have glossed over the horrors of the crucifixion. As regards Pontius Pilate, they try to depict him as a sympathizer of Jesus and the Jews. Circumstantial evidence, however, disproves their stand. Let our Christian

⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an 4:157 Yousuf Ali.

friends, therefore, have a fresh look into the accounts of the crucifixion to update their knowledge about the same.

Even an ordinary reader will observe numerous lacunas during the comparative study of the narratives of sacrifice in the Gospels. Some of the same can be highlighted here:

- 1.** None of the Roman soldiers arresting Jesus knew him personally.
- 2.** It was during the dark hours of the night that Judas and Jesus kissed each other. The soldiers arrested one of them. Wasn't it Judas himself, nobody knows? (see Mat 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-50, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:3-12).
- 3.** The possibilities of the arrest of Judah instead of Jesus are quite obvious.
- 4.** On way to Golgotha the soldiers had placed the cross on the shoulders of Simon from Cyrene (Mark 15:21, Mat 27:32, Luke 23:26). John, however, differs from them to show that Jesus had carried the cross himself (19:17). Let the Christian followers of St. Paul, therefore, reconcile the difference.
- 5.** Gospels do not refer to the custodians, if any, of Jesus or Judah during their release from carrying the cross. There also is no reference about replacement of Simon with the victim i.e. Jesus or Judah. Most probably the person carrying the cross was executed instead of Jesus because neither anyone among the executioners nor someone out of his apostles or disciples was a witness to certify the execution of Jesus.
- 6.** The narrative of crucifixion Mat 27:32-37 KJV is confusing because it seems to apply more to Simon from Cyrene than to Judas or Jesus Christ. Although the canonical Gospels fail to provide any additional information yet some other sources suggest Simon as the true victim of Crucifixion.

According to some Gnostic traditions, Simon of Cyrene, by mistaken identity, suffered the events leading up to the

crucifixion, and died on the cross instead of Jesus (...) Basilides in his Gospel of Basilides is reported by Irenaeus as having taught a docetic doctrine of Christ's passion. He states the teaching that Christ in Jesus, as a wholly divine being, could not suffer bodily pain and did not die on the cross; but that the person crucified was, in fact, Simon of Cyrene.

"He appeared on earth as a man and performed miracles. Thus he himself did not suffer. Rather, a certain Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry his cross for him. It was he who was ignorantly and erroneously crucified, being transfigured by him, so that he might be thought to be Jesus. Moreover, Jesus assumed the form of Simon, and stood by laughing at them" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*).⁸⁹

7. After reaching Golgotha, if the custodians had reproduced the arrested person with the one carrying the cross, it could most probably be Judas than Jesus.

8. The victim has been supposed to have died much earlier than the normal time of death on cross. Why he died so soon nobody knows? The artifact, however, saved the victim from his legs being broken by the executioners. In case it was Jesus, the legs were necessary to keep him moving after the so-called death on cross.

9. To ascertain about the death, therefore, the executioners pierced on the side of the victim and blood oozed out of it. Doesn't it show that the victim was alive till then? It is said that Jesus also had some acquaintance with the Essenes associates of John the Baptist. They or some other disciples of Jesus might have known the secret. Had they removed the victim alive from the sepulcher to conceal the facts? We do not know.

10. In case the victim was Judas then he could possibly be the person who "*burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*" (Acts 1:18 KJV). This means that the victim of sacrifice and the person found dead at *Akeldama* i.e. the field of blood was the same person.

11. It has also been reported that Judas after throwing the coins before the chief priests, had gone away and hanged himself. (This seems to be a mere supposition than a fact witnessed by others).

⁸⁹ Wikipedia, s.v. *Simon of Cyrene*.

12. The Christians rely mostly on chapters 26 and 27 of Matthew as detailed account of the arrest and execution of Jesus Christ. Unluckily, these are the chapters which contain the most dubious and self-contradictory assertions in the text. According to Matthew, the chief priests took counsel between themselves and purchased potter's field with those coins. He reports:

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself (...) And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.⁹⁰

The narrative of Matthew given above seems to have been composed merely to show fulfillment of the prophecy the evangelist wrongly refers to Jeremy or Jeremiah. According to him:

Then was fulfilled **that which was spoken by Jeremy** the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value.⁹¹

The Evangelist has obviously committed a mistake here. The prophecy actually pertains to Zechariah 11:13 where we find it narrated in the following words:

"And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD".

No other Gospel including Luke has referred to it. It is, however, in the Acts attributed to Luke that gives us a contradictory but ridiculous variant of the same. He says:

Now **this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst**, and all his bowels gushed out.⁹²

Now if Judas had purchased the field himself, the priest has nothing to do with it. Moreover after having fallen headlong

⁹⁰ Mat 27:5, 7 KJV.

⁹¹ Mat 27:9 KJV.

⁹² Act 1:18 KJV.

there, how could Judah burst asunder in the midst than in the head? This also suggests that it was Judas, (crucified as Christ) whose side had been pierced by the executioners? We, therefore, fail to identify the true person or persons purchasing the field or the one crucified by the Romans.

13. Although the centurion did not recognize Jesus yet Mark 15:39 and Matthew 27:26 quote him saying: "truly this was the son of God". Luke 23:47 quotes him "truly this man was innocent". John, however, is silent about it. Whom should we believe, we do not know.

14. Jesus was crucified on the third hour (Mark 15:25). Jesus was crucified on the 6th hour (John 19:14-15). Matthew and Luke show 6 hours as the duration of crucifixion.

15. The resurrection had neither been witnessed by any of the male companions of Jesus Christ nor did anyone among them report the same. All depends on Mary Magdalene. Mark reports that:

9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, **believed not.**⁹³

Luke introduced her in the following words:

And certain women, which had been **healed of evil spirits and infirmities**, Mary called Magdalene, **out of whom went seven devils** (Luk 8:2 KJV).

Mary Magdalene was the ill-reputed woman who blundered to visit the site of the burial. She saw nothing herself except an angel and the empty grave. Later appearance of a man to Mary Magdalene and Mary mother of James can be nothing except hallucination of the women. We can, therefore, make assumptions about the event than attaining any credible knowledge to utilize it as the foundation of our faith for salvation.

⁹³ Mar 16:9-11 KJV.

The resurrection and the person actually crucified remains doubtful till today. Moreover, the mystery of empty grave is yet to be resolved because it suggests something fishy on the part of certain followers of Jesus Christ.

For early Christian fathers, however, the confession of the villainous role of Adam and easy redemption through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ had been the most alluring components of the New Theology invented by St. Paul due to which they could hardly appraise the events critically or analyze and compare the difference in reports from the arrest to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. No follower of St. Paul could relish the rejection of the theology assuring him easy salvation, holiness and the life-everlasting. Actually, the doctrine had been sold under such an attractive label that people could hardly stop to ponder or to look in the mouth of the gift horse for the risk of losing it. Each of the Christian saints, therefore, devoted himself to support the doctrines of St. Paul. No one ever paid any attention to the fact that they were diverting far away from the unanimous teachings of all the prophets including Jesus Christ himself. Teachings of Torah that, God was the ultimate and the only saviour of humankind were set aside scornfully to qualify for the salvation offered by St. Paul.⁹⁴ As such, confession of Jesus as God, the judge and the only savior of humankind leaves no role for God the father to play.

No Change in the Original Nature of Creation

According to the Christian Creed, the sinful act of one man i.e. Adam had caused infection and degeneration in the original nature of humankind so that they stood debilitated

⁹⁴ The Prophets of Israel had always been preaching the LORD as the only and the ultimate savior of mankind. God as the savior was the oft-repeated theme of Psalms e.g. 30:1-3, 31:1-6, 32:1-2,5-7, 33:20-21, 34:22, 37:39, 38:21-22, 40:9-10, 42:5 (repeated thrice), 50:15-22,23, 51:1,2,7,9,12, 55:16, 56:3, 59:1,2, 62:5-6, 68:19 to Psa 71:3, Psa 85:4. Reference may be made to 1ch 16:35. As such, the replacement of the God of Israel with Jesus Christ as savior of mankind was a clear defection from the Almighty.

to do anything good for their salvation. They assert this only to impress the necessity of the redemption through another man i.e. Jesus Christ suggested as savior of mankind. It is believed that by giving his life on the Roman cross, Jesus had not only defeated sin and death but also restored the original and perfect nature of creation to those who confess him as the Lord and ultimate savior of mankind. Although the Christian Church grants salvation at spot to the confessors of sin yet we believe that no one has any authority to forgive the sins of humankind except the sovereign LORD God, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Evolver, the Supreme Judge and the administrator of the universe. No one can claim salvation before final judgment of the LORD in the world to come. Christian propagation of salvation before the Day of Judgment, therefore, has no substance in it. The vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, failed either to ward off death or to restore the original perfection of nature spoiled by Adam. It implies that **the sin of Adam the man, had done such an all encompassing damage to the original nature of creation that even the ignoble death of God son of God on the Roman cross failed to rectify the same.**

It is, therefore, evident from the above that Jesus Christ had no powers either to restore the original perfection of nature or the authority to forgive the sins of mankind outrightly. Like a helpless person, he had to take on him the sins of others and expiate the same through his death on cross. The Christians, however, fail to realize that ignoble death on the Roman cross was incompatible with the transcendent majesty and glory of Jesus Christ as the Lord God of the Universe having full powers to punish or forgive his humble creatures.

Nothing Impossible Demanded from Humankind

The assumption of any debility of humankind to do good conflicts with God's covenants enjoining obedience to the commandments of the LORD. In case mankind was unable

to do good, the LORD would not have obliged them to do so. The Qur'ān asserts the same emphatically:

On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear.
(...)⁹⁵

God's deputing thousands and thousands of prophets towards humankind and formalization of various covenants with them is the irrefutable and everlasting proof of neutral disposition of man. The LORD commanded them to do good only when they had the capabilities to fulfill the commandment. How could the LORD demand positive response to His commandments from the people with degenerated nature or from those who were dead in spirit?

The second assumption that 'on account of the sin of Adam (we?) his descendants come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace which we ought to have according to God's original plan to be holy and just in His sight'⁹⁶ cannot also be accepted as a truth. Nothing can thwart the plans of God. No act of Adam or any other creature in the universe had the powers to prevent the LORD from carrying out His will.

Instead of worshiping the LORD wholeheartedly, the Christians continued to make strenuous efforts to prove Adam and Eve as the root cause of the perversity and degradation of mankind. Human desperation due to utter wreck and ruin caused by Adam and Eve was suggested as deep-rooted foundation to build thereon the lofty structure of the doctrine of salvation through the redeemer in the shape of Jesus Christ for which we find no support from the word of God or the Prophets sent by Him.

⁹⁵ Al-Qur'ān 2:286 (Yusuf Ali).

⁹⁶ Rev. Joseph J. Baierl, *The Creed Explained*, (Rochester, N. Y., Art Print Shop, 77, St. Paul St., 1943), p. 215.

Humankind Distinct from God & the Angels

Before closing this chapter, it may be useful to keep in mind some other trends of Christian thought. It has been said that:

What the whole teaching of the Bible does imply is that sin brought into death all that makes it awful and terrible, and that what Adam's sin entailed upon himself and upon his descendants was penal rather than natural death.⁹⁷

Islam and all other religions revealed by the Lord deny any such possibilities. We also find no empirical evidence of penal deaths as stated above. No one can die without specific decree of the Lord. The Qur'ān denies the concept in the following:

Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing (...).⁹⁸

If Allah were to punish men according to what they deserve. He would not leave on the back of the (earth) a single living creature: but He gives them respite for a stated Term: when their Term expires, verily Allah has in His sight all His Servants.⁹⁹

Another misconception of the Christians is stated in the following:

Adam was 'very good,' possessing boundless possibilities of development and advancement, onward and upward, towards the uttermost perfection of his being and the attainment of his glorious destiny. And he was immortal, in the sense of being exempt from all that makes death terrible, from all that makes death what to our minds it is.¹⁰⁰

Relying upon creation of man in the likeness of God, the Christian theologians assumed all types of perfections in Adam. Likeness with God or with the Angels had no provision for any sin or error in him. They, therefore, victimize him more and more for having done something which actually lay beyond the prowess of man.

⁹⁷ H. V. S. Eck, *Sin*, 2nd ed. p. 8.

⁹⁸ Al-Qur'ān 3:145 (Yusuf Ali).

⁹⁹ Al-Qur'ān 35:45 (Yusuf Ali). See also Al-Qur'an 16:16.

¹⁰⁰ H. V. S. Eck, *Sin*, 2nd ed. p. 9-10.

Christian fathers have no knowledge of the fact that the Almighty had created Adam as a new species to be tested and tried in the capacity of the vicegerent of the LORD on Earth. It was for the purpose of test and trial that the Almighty created Adam with such a complexity of nature that he had neutral disposition towards the good and evil. Due to their ignorance of the purpose of creation of man, the Christians fail to comprehend the creation of man with conflicting inclinations. Since they had assumed Adam in the semblance of God, his fault during his probation in the garden could not be condoned by them. To present him as a villain, they continue to highlight a magnified image of the darker side of Adam. As such, they refuse to see anything good or meritorious in him. Following the Jews, they also continue to blemish the luminous figures, the great prophets of the LORD who had been paragons of virtue and role models of piety and righteousness to be imitated by their followers. The overall degradation and condemnation of humankind is propagated by them to necessitate the existence of Jesus Christ as a sinless son of God and redeemer of mankind from the sinfulness.

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Original Sin in the OT

Most of the Christians continue to believe that the doctrine of Original Sin had been developed logically out of the scriptural statements. From the study of the Old Testament, however, it transpires that the concept of original sin causing death and degeneration in the original nature of creation is not traceable in the Genesis or any other part of the OT. It has also not been endorsed by any of the prophets of Israel from Moses to Jesus. That the death entered the world due to the original sin of one man¹⁰¹ has neither been stated explicitly in the Genesis nor could it be deduced from any narrative in the Old Testament. After reviewing various passages of the Old Testament emphasizing the universality of Sin, Mr. Tennant observed that:

It can certainly be said that this sinfulness is nowhere traced to Adam and the effects of his fall upon human nature collectively. Nor is there the smallest reason for suspecting that any such view lay tacitly behind the assertions of man's proneness to evil from his birth.¹⁰²

The legend of fall in Gen 2:8-9, 3:13-24 does not expressly blame Adam or Eve for the introduction of sin, death or degeneration in the nature of their descendants. It is, therefore, evident from the above that St. Paul derived the primary concepts of Original Sin of Adam and its impact on his progeny not from the scriptures but from the Jewish speculations and uncanonical literature prevailing during his age.

It has been seen that though Judaism, in the earliest Christian centuries, possessed definite theories of Original Sin, these were not taken over in their Jewish form by the Fathers of the Church. The doctrine of the Fall, as a whole, was deduced

¹⁰¹ Rom. 5:12

¹⁰² *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 102

afresh. S. Paul was, of course, the connecting link between Jewish and Christian teaching on this point. His doctrine of Adam was derived from the Jewish schools; and it served to mould, to a considerable extent, the subsequent thought of the Fathers. But the ecclesiastical doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin were not deduced from S. Paul's brief statements on these subjects; in fact they were not contained therein.¹⁰³

While reviewing various developments leading to the formulation of the doctrine of Original Sin, Mr. F. R. Tennant observed that:

It must be concluded from the foregoing chapters that the doctrines of the Fall and of Original Sin have their beginnings, as doctrines, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, but rather in the Jewish speculation and the uncanonical literature of the age which intervened between them. It was thence that S. Paul derived, readymade, his teaching as to the influence of the first man and his sin upon the race. It was therefore thence also, through S. Paul, that the Christian Church derived the main conception out of which the ecclesiastical doctrine of the origin and propagation of human sinfulness was at length elaborated.¹⁰⁴

Tracing the background of the doctrine, Mr. Tennant also made reference to Psalms 51 which apparently alludes to some inherited tendency to sin. He, however, was inclined to see in it more of the plea for compassion than mankind's share in the so-called Original Sin.

Gradual Development of the Doctrine

While discussing gradual development of the doctrine of Original Sin, F. R. Tennant observed that even St. Paul did not conceive the doctrine in the form it was formulated subsequently. He did suggest sinfulness and degeneration of mankind through Adam and Eve yet he did not propound a complete theory thereof. Maturation of the doctrine of Original Sin, therefore, took several centuries after the death of St. Paul. Many renowned Christian fathers continued to contribute to the theme for a long time to

¹⁰³ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 343.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, p. 272

arrive at an elaborated and well formulated doctrine of the *Original Sin*. Mr. Tennant observed that:

The doctrine ... did not receive definite shape and fullness of content until, during the Pelagian controversy in which they were largely involved, they were systematized by the comprehensive mind of S. Augustine. They underwent, of course, much modification and development in subsequent ages; but with such later growth the present treatise has no concern. The point is that the Christian doctrine of the Fall and of its consequences certainly did not exist in anything like completeness in the mind of S. Paul, whereas it had practically assumed its completeness in that of S. Augustine.¹⁰⁵

Fathers such as Irenaeus (130 – 202 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (c.150 – c. 215), Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 225 A.D.), Origen Adamantius (184/185 – 253/254), Cyprian (D 298), Hilary of Poitiers (c.300 – c.368), Cyril (ca. 313 – 386 A.D.), Athanasius (b. ca. 296-298 – d. 373 A.D.), and Saint Ambrose (c.330 – 397 AD), had been making their contributions to the theory of Original Sin and atonement. About Irenaeus, it has been said:

Irenaeus, in whom a Christian doctrine of the Fall first appears, seems to have been guided to his view of the connexion between the sinful race and its first parent by his doctrine of Recapitulation. The passage Rom. v. 12 ff. was used to confirm the results thus obtained, but does not appear to have been the starting point whence Irenaeus set out.¹⁰⁶

Immediately later than Irenaeus, Origen and Tertulian came forward with two definite theories explaining the nature of hereditary taint and the mode of its propagation accounting for the virtual participation of the race in Adam's Sin. It has also been opined that:

Tertulian in the West seems to have been to furnish the very concrete and definite hypothesis contained in his writing by the traducianist psychology which he borrowed from heathen

¹⁰⁵ *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 273.

¹⁰⁶ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 343-344.

philosophers.¹⁰⁷

Although each of the afore-stated Christian fathers had contributed something towards the development of the highly complicated Augustinian doctrine of *Original Sin*¹⁰⁸ yet it is said that Tertullian “*was the first to formulate the idea of inherited sin or corruption of nature, and to explain the process by which such corruption is handed on from generation to generation*”.¹⁰⁹ He “*about the year 200 started to develop the theology of Original Sin*.”¹¹⁰

Tertullian, therefore, prepared the way for St. Augustine to finalize his doctrine of Original Sin. He was the first person to formulate the idea of inherited sin or corruption of nature. By doing so he also explained the process by which such corruption was handed on from generation to generation. F. R. Tennant, therefore, observes that:

The Speculations of this father on the subject of the propagation of sinfulness are of the highest importance in the history of the doctrine of Original Sin. Tertullian may perhaps be regarded as the founder of the Church's doctrine of hereditary sinfulness of nature derived from Adam.¹¹¹

Another important figure to contribute to the Augustinian formulation of the theory of Original Sin was Ambrose. It is said that:

This Father's writings represent a distinct and considerable step onwards towards the fullness of the Augustinian doctrines of the Fall and Original sin.

Ambrose, in the first place, supplies Augustine with suggestions for his exaltation of the original estate of Adam before the Fall.¹¹²

Efforts to present the theory of Original Sin in a systematic form continued for about 400 years after St. Paul. It was towards the early part of the 5th Century A.D. that St. Augustine succeeded to formulate the doctrine of Original

¹⁰⁷ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 344.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, p. 336-345.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, p. 335.

¹¹⁰ *Colliers Encyclopedia*, Vol. 18, Copyright 1992. p. 223, s.v. 'original sin'.

¹¹¹ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 328.

¹¹² *ibid*, p. 338.

Sin in a logical manner. The final formulation of the doctrine was not, therefore, based entirely on the introspection of St. Augustine but it also included an essence of the progressive thought of certain renowned Christian fathers preceding him.

Some of the modern scholars seem to suggest that the doctrine of Original Sin formulated by Augustine was not entirely the outcome of his independent study of the history of faith or an objective analysis of human nature observed by the scholars. The despairing circumstances towards the last years of Augustine's life had their impact on his writings. Karen Armstrong records that:

In 430, the last year of his life, Augustine had watched the Vandals besieging the city of Hippo, as the western provinces of the Roman Empire fell helplessly before the invading barbarian tribes. A deep sadness pervades Augustine's work during these final years, and is especially evident in his interpretation of the fall of Adam and Eve. The tragedy of Rome's collapse had convinced Augustine that this original sin had sentenced the human race to eternal damnation. Even after our redemption by Christ, our humanity was impaired by concupiscence, the irrational desire to take pleasure in creatures rather than in God. The guilt of original sin was transmitted to Adam's descendants through the sexual act: when our reasoning powers were swamped by passion, God was forgotten, and men and women revelled shamelessly in one another.¹¹³

While developing his doctrine of Original Sin, St. Augustine described three different states of human nature.

1. A state of original blessedness
2. A state of fallenness
3. A state of restored and graced nature

Augustine argued that in the pre-lapsarian state i.e. in the state of original blessedness, Adam had the capacity to choose and to do what is good. He was, therefore, entirely

¹¹³ Karen Armstrong, *The Bible, The Biography*, (London: MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall, 2007), p 126.

set on God. As against this the state of fallenness was caused due to Adam's particular sin of pride which was the root of all other sins.

We, however, observe that St. Augustine fails to provide the **time period of the pre-lapsarian state** mentioned by him. He, therefore, has nothing to tell us of the duration during which Adam enjoyed the state of original blessedness. In case, it was just a transient or fleeting moment imagined by him, there was no need even to mention it. He also refers to Adam's particular **sin of pride**. Since we find nothing describing the pride of Adam in the scriptures, we take it just as a baseless assumption of St. Augustine than a fact.

In this respect, some criticism on the opinions of St. Augustine may be useful for the readers:

Augustine, by his intellectual strength, his dramatic religious experience, and his rediscovery of Pauline 'grace', commands our moral sympathy; but his own conception of sin is radically unsound, rests on a mistaken exegesis of Scripture, and necessitates deductions impossible to a Christian view of God and Man. While Augustine endeavours to escape Manichaeism by describing sin as a lack rather than an entity, yet he gives it a place within humanity which may prove to be really Manichaean in the eternal duality it sets up. All sin is traced to the fall of Adam; its propagation in the race is not due to imitation of Adam's sin, but to the possession of a corrupt nature inherited from Adam' which has left man incapable for any movement towards salvation apart from the help of God's Spirit.¹¹⁴

It has been further recorded that:

It is absolutely impossible to retain Augustine's conception of inherited sin apart from his theory that our corruption is due to the sinfulness of concupiscence, a judgment that condemns marriage as sinful and the cause of the continued transmission of sin; monasticism is the only logical outcome of Augustinianism.

There are intellectual difficulties in the system that leave it riddled with inconsistencies. Augustine is bound to allow that

¹¹⁴ W. E. Orchard, D.D, *Modern Theories of Sin*, (London,: James Clarke & Co, 1909), p. 21-22.

men still retain their freedom, in spite of the fall, and yet he declares that they can do no good; this is not real freedom whatever else it may be. He admits that sin springs from the will, yet it is inherited sin that dominates his scheme, for men will be lost for inherited sin, even when no wilful sin has been added. In shifting the whole problem of the origin of sin from man's present condition to the initial transgression of Adam so far from getting nearer to a solution, simply intensifies the difficulty, for sin in man as he now is, is explicable on the ground of his possessing a sinful nature, but it is inexplicable in Adam who, *ex hypothesi*, was created good.¹¹⁵

This leads us to believe that the Original Sin is the ground and fount of all actual sin. We, however, do not find any revelation of the Lord or teachings of the prophets either to uphold the doctrine of Original Sin or its remedy through the rite of Baptism. Such concepts had been unknown to the prophets of the Lord. As such, both the Dogma of Original Sin and its remedy through Baptism are the innovations of the Christian fathers. We cannot, therefore, accept such concepts as divinely revealed truths.

According to the the Christian fathers, the penalties for Adam's sin were 1: Death; loss of the gift of immortality, 2: Ignorance 3: Difficulty i.e. the loss of ability to accomplish the good one wills. They, however, believed that Baptism removed Original Sin and the 'guilt for concupiscence' but not concupiscence itself. Augustine observes that:

Concupiscence prohibits true freedom until nature is liberated by grace. In Augustine's judgment, human nature is not neutrally open toward good or evil. It is biased toward evil. While human beings retained freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) after Adam's sin, it is **free choice in bondage to sin**. In fallen nature what free choice does easily is choose evil. More difficult, perhaps even impossible in Augustine's opinion, is choosing and doing the good. By Adam's sin human beings lost true freedom (*libertas*), the freedom to direct themselves wholly toward their true good, God. Freedom was

¹¹⁵ W. E. Orchard, D.D, *Modern Theories of Sin*, p. 23.

weakened by Adam's sin. Now the will was misdirected.¹¹⁶

As regards fall, Augustine believed in moral and metaphysical fall. He believed that Adam had lost the image of God through his sin. Redemption to him was a buyback from the disaster which signified that God had set the relation between humankind and God right again or humanity has been brought back to its original direction and purpose. These concepts of Augustine were opposed strongly by Pelagius as shall be discussed in the following.

The Pelagian Controversy

Pelagius was a British or perhaps Irish monk who had settled in Rome about the year 400 when probably well on in years. He was a man of learning and great moral earnestness enjoying excellent repute. Pelagius became renowned mainly due to his conflict with Augustine¹¹⁷ of Hippo, who gave classical form to the doctrine of Original Sin. It has been observed that:

Pelagius (fl. c. 390-418) was an ascetic who opposed the idea of predestination and asserted a strong version of the doctrine of free will. He was accused by Augustine of Hippo and others of denying the need for divine aid in performing good works. For him (according to them), the only grace necessary was the declaration of the law; humans were not wounded by Adam's sin and were perfectly able to fulfill the law apart from any divine aid. He denied the more specific doctrine of original sin as developed by Augustine. Pelagius was declared a heretic by the Council of Carthage. His interpretation of a doctrine of free will became known as Pelagianism. He was well educated, fluent in both Greek and Latin, and learned in theology.¹¹⁸

Pelagius had been one of the greatest opponents of the theory of Original Sin developed by St. Augustine and Others. He *"denied any original sin inherited from Adam, and affirmed that all men now have the power not to sin."*

¹¹⁶ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2002), p. 69.

¹¹⁷ Saint Augustine (354 - 430). Christian Bishop and Theologian, Author of *Confessions* and *City of God*, was perhaps the most significant Christian thinker after St. Paul. (Britannica, 2013).

¹¹⁸ Wikipedia, s.v. 'Pelagius'.

*Like the Stoics generally, he recognized that the mass of men are bad. Adam's sin set them an ill example, which they have been quick to follow. Hence they almost all need to be set right.*¹¹⁹ Tatha Viley concludes that:

In Pelagius, Augustine perceived the threat to Christian faith in an overconfidence in human freedom. An underemphasis on divine grace in moral, decision and action, and a minimalizing of the necessity of the Christ's redemption. Pelagius's appeal to the neutrality of human freedom toward good and evil led Augustine to emphasize the Impotence of moral nature and its bias toward evil.¹²⁰

According to Pelagius, God's primary grace is moral nature itself. He argued that moral nature is God's gift which enables human beings to know and to do the good. Human nature, therefore, remains unchanged by Adam's sin. The following excerpt from *Original Sin* may represent the standpoint of Pelagius:

The image of God in human beings is this capacity for moral choice and performance. Choosing and doing the good do not require a further gift of divine assistance. (...) This view of Pelagius was particularly offensive to Augustine. He thought it suggested a "natural salvation," rendering Christ unnecessary for salvation. It seemed to Augustine that Pelagius was saying human beings could merit their own justification by keeping the law and not sinning.¹²¹

The same writer further observes that:

Pelagius specifically rejected the inheritance theory of original sin advanced by Augustine. He did not believe that Adam's sin was transmitted to humankind through sexual intercourse. He maintained that the spread of sin in human history was due to the imitation of Adam's bad example. Pelagius also rejected Augustine's idea that Adam's sin had caused a defect in human nature. Pelagius did not think that it could change human nature.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 168.

¹²⁰ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 73-74.

¹²¹ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2002) p. 68.

¹²² Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*. p. 69.

While denying the inheritance of Original Sin from Adam, Pelagius affirmed that all men now have the power not to sin. Freedom of human will "If I ought, I can" well expresses his position. As such, according to him, human nature had the capabilities to do either good or evil.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes Pelagianism as under:

Pelagianism, received its name from Pelagius and designates a heresy of the fifth century, which denied original sin as well as Christian grace (....) Pelagius denied the primitive state in paradise and Original Sin. ... (He) insisted on the naturalness of concupiscence and the death of the body, and ascribed the actual existence and universality of sin to the bad example which Adam set by his first sin (....) the value of Christ's redemption was, in his opinion limited only to instruction (doctrina) and example (exemplum) which the savior threw into the balance as a counter weight against Adam's wicked example so that nature retains the ability to conquer sin and to gain eternal life ever without the aid of grace. By justification we are indeed cleansed of our personal sins through faith alone.¹²³

Pelagius had contracted a friendship with Coelestius of Rome, a lawyer of noble descent who had great influence on furtherance of Pelagianism in Italy. Deacon Paulinus of Milan submitted to Bishop Aurelius the memorial about heretical concepts of Coelestius. These ran as follows:

(1) Even if Adam had not sinned, he would have died. (2) Adam's sin harmed only himself, not the human race. (3) Children just born are in the same state as Adam before his fall. (4) The whole human race neither dies through Adam's sin or death, nor rises again through the resurrection of Christ. (5) The (Mosaic) Law is as good a guide to heaven as the Gospel (6) Even before the advent of Christ there were men who were without sin.¹²⁴

Augustine himself held Pelagius in error as denying Original Sin rejecting salvation infused grace and affirming human power to live without sin. Bishop Julian of Aclanum in Italy and Nestorius of Constantinople had been supporting the

¹²³ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Ed. By Charles G. Herberman and others, (New York: The Encyclopedea Press. Inc. Robert AppletonCo., 1911) Volume 11, pg. 604.

¹²⁴ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Ed. By G. Herberman 191 pg. 605.

views of Pelagius. Early in 415 A.D. Augustine sent Orosius to Jerome, then in Palestine to accuse Pelagius before Bishop John of Jerusalem but instead of siding with Augustine, the Bishop approved Pelagius. Subsequently, a Synod held in Diospolis (Lydda in Palestine) the same year declared Pelagius orthodox.

In 416, A.D. the synod of Carthage and synod in Mileve rejected doctrines of Pelagius and Coelestius as contradictory to the Catholic faith. Following teachings of Coelestius were found at odds with Augustine's whom they venerated as theological authority for the Christian faith.

(1) Adam was created mortal and would have died whether or not he had sinned; (2) the whole human race did not have to die because of Adam's sin; (3) Adam's sin was not transmitted to his descendants; (4) infants are born in the same state as Adam prior to his sin; and (5) the Law (the Old Testament) was as sufficient for salvation as the gospel.¹²⁵

"Both Synods wrote to Innocent I requesting his supreme sanction' and the Pope 'excluded Pelagius and Caelestius from communion with the church until they should come to their senses'¹²⁶

After the death of Pope Innocent (402-417) a new Synod met in Carthage in early 418. At their instance, the Western Emperor, Honorius issued a rescript condemning Pelagianism. It also ordered, the exile of its adherents. Williston Walker, therefore, recorded that:

An edict of emperor Honorius in 419 required of the West to subscribe a condemnation of Pelagius and Coelestius; Julian and 18 others in Italy refused. Several of them were driven into exile and sought refuge in the East. (...) About 429 Julian and Coelestius found some support from Nestorius and Constantinople;¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 72.

¹²⁶ Ibid, pg. 606.

¹²⁷ Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 3rd Ed. 1970), p. 170.

Pelagius died in c. 420 A.D. and about 10 years after his death, the third council in Ephesus condemned Pelagianism whereafter it was officially rejected in the West as well as in the East. **Since then, the doctrine of Original Sin propounded by St. Augustine became the official and orthodox Creed of the Christianity.** Pelagian controversy, however, did not subside up to and until the approval of canons of synod of Carthage and Orange approved by Pope Boniface II (530-532).¹²⁸ **After the council of Carthage and Orange, therefore, Original Sin became a church doctrine in a more formal sense.**

It has been observed that Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 A.D.) 'fully absorbed the doctrine of original sin and saw the human mind as irreparably damaged and twisted. God was now difficult to access. We could know nothing about Him.'¹²⁹ Gregory held that "man is fettered in original sin evidence of which is his birth through lust."¹³⁰ Ever since, Gregory the Great, there has been no substantial change in the popular creed of the Christians in the doctrine of Original Sin.

The controversy over the doctrine of Original Sin, however, did not end either with the death of Pelagius in 420 A.D. or with the approval of the canons of the synod of Carthage and Orange by Pope Boniface II as stated above. It continued to survive as a symbol of dissention from the doctrine of Original Sin of the Catholic Church. The antagonism of Pelagius and Augustine about the Original Sin continued to gain such fame that even other disagreements from the doctrines of the Church, used to be categorized as Pelagianism.

An overwhelming majority of the Christians followed the concepts of St. Paul and the doctrine of Original Sin formulated by St. Augustine. It was due to his influence that the councils of Carthage (411-418 c.e.) and Orange (529 c.e.) brought theological speculation about the original sin into the official lexicon of the church. Later on, Anselm

¹²⁸ *ibid*, pg. 168-172.

¹²⁹ Karen Armstrong, *The Bible, The Biography*, p 128-29.

¹³⁰ Williston Walker, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 174.

of Canterbury (d. 1109) used these concepts to assert the indispensability of the Christ in the following:

Adam's sin created a debt owed to God. Given the transcendent status of the one insulted by the sin, no more human being could repay the debt. Only a God-man could satisfy it for humanity. This, Anselm argued, was the reason for the incarnation. Christ paid back the debt through his death on the cross.¹³¹

Contemporary Views on Pelagianism

Skipping over a long period after St. Augustine and Gregory the Great, it may be useful to produce views of eminent philosophers like Descartes¹³² and Kant (1724-1804 AD) in the following. Descartes did not endorse the view imputing Adam and Eve for transmission of sinfulness to the race:

Descartes himself held that error and sin arise from the union of the soul with the body, (...) But it seems to be implied that this union and relation was not of the nature of a punishment or a defect, but essential to man's constitution as received from the Hand of Creator.¹³³

While most of the Christians believed in the validity of the doctrine of the Original Sin, there had been many who found numerous obstacles in its acceptance. Repudiation of the validity of the original sin is not, therefore, new to the Christians. Kant¹³⁴, the 18th century German philosopher also seems to differ from the inherited nature of sinfulness. According to him:

Evil is brought about when a man adopts impulses of his sense-nature, rather than the dictates of his reason, into his 'maxims' or the subjective ruling principles which his will appoints to itself for the exercise of its freedom.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 7.

¹³² Rene Descartes, (1596-1650) the famous French philosopher and Mathematician also called 'Father of Modern Philosophy'.

¹³³ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p 43.

¹³⁴ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German Philosopher of Russian Origin who authored '*Critique of Pure Reason*'.

¹³⁵ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p 52.

Kant did not agree with Augustine's judgment that human beings were unable to do the good without the assistance of Divine Grace. He insisted that human nature itself was good and it remains capable of moral improvement.¹³⁶

Kant, too, described human nature as both good and evil. "By nature, man is neither good nor bad, or rather he is by nature at once good and bad. There is in him a twofold natural inclination, for good and for evil."¹³⁷

J. J. Rousseau¹³⁸, too, differed from the doctrine of original sin causing degeneration in the nature of man. He argued that human impulses were always innocent and good.

J. J. Rousseau rejected Blaise Pascal Augustinian argument that an original perversity of human will causes the misery of human existence. (...) as against Pascal and original corruption, Rousseau affirmed an original goodness. Rousseau assumed first that human beings are good by nature.¹³⁹

The views of certain modern scholars may also help us to evaluate the stance of Pelagius and credibility of the doctrine of Original Sin in the present times. We find in the Wikipedia that:

Due to his status as a heretic, little of his work has come down to the present day except in the quotes of his opponents. However, more recently some have defended **Pelagius as a misunderstood orthodox**.

Recent analysis of his thinking suggests that it was, in fact, highly orthodox, following in the tradition established by the early fathers and in keeping with the teaching of the church in both the East and the West. (...) From what we are able to piece together from the few sources available... it seems that the Celtic monk held to an orthodox view of the provenience of God's grace, and did not assert that individuals could achieve salvation purely by their own efforts.¹⁴⁰

Pelagian Controversy had in fact become part and parcel of the doctrine of the Original Sin. Christianity could never free itself from the impact of Pelagius on the doctrine.

¹³⁶ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 114.

¹³⁷ *ibid*, p. 113.

¹³⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d. 1778).

¹³⁹ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 112.

¹⁴⁰ *Wikipedia*, s.v. Pelagius.

Importance of Pelagian controversy is also evident from the fact that article IX of the doctrine of Anglican Church starts from denial of Pelagian Controversy.

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature (*vitium et depravatio naturae*) of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the **flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit**, and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserve the God's wrath and damnation.¹⁴¹

According to F.R. Tennant:

The Roman Church has a more complicated doctrine of the Fall and its consequences. Original Sin is, or results from, the loss of original righteousness, which did not belong to man's nature but a supernatural addition to it, a *donum superadditum*.¹⁴²

The Orthodox define sin in the manner quoted above to refute Pelagius of the 5th century and also to controvert his followers like Ana Baptists of the 16th century who held that:

Sin stood only in acts of sin, that there was no inherent flaw or taint in man's nature whereby he was inclined to sin, that every man is, in respect of sin. in the position of Adam when he was first created without inherent taint, and that therefore when man sins it is merely a following, an imitation, of Adam; it is due to no inherited tendency: it contributes nothing to the sum of the corruption of human nature.¹⁴³

Dissention Over the Doctrine of Original Sin

Although majority of the Catholics always adhered to the doctrine of Original Sin yet there had also been notable dissenters from the same. Since the reformation, there had been an increasing trend to "reject original sin completely

¹⁴¹ *The Origin and Propagation*, pg. 154.

¹⁴² *ibid*, pg. 155.

¹⁴³ H. V. S. ECK. M.A., *Sin*, pg. 7.

or to alter the traditional teachings on the subject in a more or less radical manner.¹⁴⁴ Tatha Wiley observes that:

The views of Roman Catholic theologians on the doctrine of original sin extend from a continued defense of its traditional formulation to a rejection of it altogether. At the latter end of the continuum, theologian **Matthew Fox calls the doctrine of original sin a false theology of sin and redemption.**

The foundational truth of Christianity, in his views, is not original sin but original blessing, the affirmation of the goodness of creation and humankind.¹⁴⁵

An excerpt from *Encyclopedia Britannica* also endorses the same:

On the other hand, the traditional doctrine that we all owe our sinfulness to the sin of the first parent of the race, either offends our moral consciousness and sense of responsibility or else confounds sinfulness with the non-moral "material" out of which our will makes sin.¹⁴⁶

Keeping in view the majority opinion of modern theologians, we can safely reiterate that the concept of Original Sin cannot be taken as a logical derivation or reliable interpretation of Genesis such as 2:17, 3:1-6 and 3:14-24. Literal meanings of the verses referred to above do not accord with the interpretation made by the Catholic Church. It has, therefore, been said that:

Today the question is further complicated by a critical problem, i.e., the relationship between the Book of Genesis and the ancient myths of the Near East. An increasing number of writers detect in the narrative the presence of popular traditions. Roman Catholic exegetes, although they defend the reality of the Fall, do not require strict acceptance of the details of the narrative in which it is portrayed. Liberal exegetes, together with many Protestant divines, see in these pages a myth that cannot be interpreted historically.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Ed. By Lauren S. Bahr and Bernard Johnston (New York: Macmillan Educational Company, 866 Third Avenue, 1992), pg. 223.

¹⁴⁵ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin.*, p. 131.

¹⁴⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 20 (Chicago. London. Toronto. Geneva. Sydney. Tokyo: Villiam Benton, Punlisher, 1966) p.702.

¹⁴⁷ *Collier's Encyclopedia*, 1992, pg. 543.

A substantial number of the scholars today discard the theory of Original Sin. Many among them seem to appreciate the observations made by Pelagius. Mst. Tatha Viley, therefore, observes that:

Schoonenberg boldly advocated retrieving Pelagius as a theological source. He proposed to extend the "Pelagian doctrine of bad example until it is orthodox once more." What Schoonenberg sought to avoid in reappropriation of Pelagius were numerous problems associated with Augustine's pessimism about human nature and the biological theory of inheritance he advanced as an explanatory principle for the universality of human sin.¹⁴⁸

Similarly, I J J Spangenberg of the University of South Africa had also observed that

The following biblical texts are usually quoted when the doctrine of original sin is discussed: Genesis 2-3, Psalm 51:7, and Romans 5:12-21. Augustine himself claimed that these passages affirmed his ideas. However, critical study of the Bible over the past three centuries has revealed that Pelagius, Celestius (sick) and Julian of Eclanum had a far better understanding of these texts and of how sin is viewed and described in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁹

Some other writers also reject the doctrine of Original Sin outrightly. **They argue that the doctrine of Original Sin was a false and unbiblical doctrine.** It has its roots neither in the Torah nor in the teachings of Jesus Christ. According to them, Bible passages used as a proof-text for the doctrine have been used out of context.

Bible passages used as proof-texts for this doctrine have been taken out of context and tortured into teaching a doctrine that is completely foreign to the Bible. Finally, They are ignorant of the fact that the doctrine of original sin is an evil doctrine that corrupts Christianity practice, blackens the character of God, excuses sin in the sinner, contradicts the Bible, makes Jesus a sinner, harms the cause of Christ, and stumbles professing Christians into hell. And It is this ignorance of Christians concerning these facts that helps to protect and perpetuate

¹⁴⁸ Tatha Viley, *Original Sin*, p. 135.

¹⁴⁹ I J J Spangenberg, p. 225.

the doctrine of original sin.¹⁵⁰

We can, therefore, conclude that the doctrine of Original Sin has lost its credibility as a Divinely revealed truth.

¹⁵⁰ Alfred T. Overstreet, *Are Men Born Sinners, The Myth of the Original Sin*, 1995, Introduction of the book.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR ORIGINAL SIN

Reliability of the Scriptures

Although, the Christians as well as the Jews continue to assert that Bible is the infallible word of God, yet with the development of textual criticism by the modern scholarship the scriptures have lost their credibility as such.

It has, therefore, been observed that:

The assumption that the Bible was a reliable historical source was among the first to be dismissed by modern scholars. Edgar Krentz notes, "At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Bible was the universal authority in all fields of knowledge, but by the end of the century that authority was eroded." The work of Isaac de la Peyrere (d. 1676), for example, questioned biblical chronology and proposed a theory of pre-Adamites. The nongeocentric physical universe discovered by Copernicus and Kepler stood at odds with the biblical conception of the world. Developments such as these contributed to a growing sense **that the Bible was an unreliable source for knowledge of the natural and human worlds.**¹⁵¹

Critical evaluation is the central task for Modern theologians and historians. They adopt objective methods to evaluate not only the source material but also reliability of the contents taking into view human advancements during the enlightened period of ours. We, therefore, believe that the revelation must turn out to be true not only in its source but also in the guidance it provides. It had to be so because the word of God cannot conflict with the work of God. Historians, scientist or geophysicists must not be able to controvert any revelation from the Lord. Bible containing thousands and thousands of mistakes cannot, therefore, be taken as infallible word of the Lord. Only the Qur'an holds

¹⁵¹ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin*, (New Jersey, Paulist Press, 2002) p. 105-106. Bold words by us to highlight the conclusion.

its ground perfectly and continues to guide not only about the human conduct but also about the environments and background of their creation. Scientists, therefore, must endorse the truth in the Qur'an and reject all that does not coincide with the reaffirmed discoveries by the nature scientists, geophysicists, archeologists and the astrophysicists etc.

Since the doctrine of original sin is believed to have been derived from the scripture and especially Gen Chapters 1-3 the same needed to be established as a divinely revealed source beyond any shadow of doubt. Without determining the absolute truth in the Genesis as referred to above, we cannot rely on the Genesis as firm foundation of faith. As such, blaming Adam for infliction of sin, degeneration and death stands on flimsy grounds. In spite of all this, the truth discovered by the modern scientists and scholars cannot be accepted by the Christian masses simply because it destroys the very foundation on which the Christian church has raised its lofty mansion of salvation through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In case we deny the origin of sin from Adam and its inheritance by all his descendants, there would be no necessity of the sacrifice of Christ on the Roman cross to expiate the sin of mankind. In this respect, Tatha Wiley observes that:

The characterization by modern literary scholars of Genesis 1-3 as myth or as a kind of parable, as the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza described it, was initially scandalous. As myth or parable, the text would no longer serve as historical knowledge of "what really happened." Like Jonah, its point lies elsewhere. Moreover modern scrutiny of the expulsion story sometimes proposed a meaning quite at odds with the church's reading. The remarks of the nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900) offer an example. "At the beginning of the Old Testament we find the famous story of God's agony. Man is represented as God's error: work, necessity, and death are presented as God's 'legitimate defense' established to keep man in a debased state...."¹⁵²

¹⁵² Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin*, p. 106.

The afore-stated categorization of the first 3 chapters of Genesis i.e. 1, 2 and 3 as a myth, therefore, knocks bottom out of the doctrine of sin. **"If Genesis 3 is a myth, modern thinkers argued, then the doctrine of original sin cannot be true."** Tatha Wiley records that:

As modern sciences and scholarship expanded knowledge of the physical and human worlds, acceptance of the Bible as an historical source for knowledge shrank. Dismissal of Genesis 1-3 as history invited, in turn, dismissal of the truth of the doctrine of original sin. If the doctrine's scriptural foundation was not historical, how could it explain the historical origin of sin? A more urgent question was implied. **Without this historical and doctrinal foundation for universality of human sinfulness, on what was the necessity of Christ based?** Or, to put it in the ecclesial framework already initiated by the Reformers, was the mediation of Christ's grace by the church necessary? Opened up for scrutiny and debate were the theological anthropology and historical worldview of the medieval scholastics assuming the historicity of Adam and Eve, and original state of perfection, the possession and loss of supernatural gifts, the first sin and its penalties, and the inheritance of a sin of nature by all humankind through physical procreation.¹⁵³

Keeping in view our earlier discussion on the reliability of the Old Testament and especially the Genesis and the remarks of scholars quoted above, we conclude that Genesis cannot be relied upon as a divinely revealed truth. It cannot, therefore, serve as a firm foundation for the Christian doctrine of original sin.

St. Paul's Diversion from the Teachings of the Prophets

Ignoring for the moment, St. Paul's denunciation of Law, unnatural speculative concepts and unsound reasoning we observe that the narrative of the paradise and the fall (Gen chapters 2 & 3) lends no support to the primary assumption that the sin and death entered the world through one man i.e. Adam.

¹⁵³ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin*, p. 107.

St. Paul and his followers were, however, unanimous on literal interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 which implied that due to their creation in the likeness of God, our first parents enjoyed perfection in the original nature of their creation and they were also endowed with sanctifying grace of the Lord. It was argued that the disorder in the original nature of creation of Adam and Eve had been caused by their disobedience to the commandment of the Lord. We disagree with St. Paul due to following reasons:

i) Entrance of sin into the world by one man and death by sin was neither the word of God nor was it acknowledged as fact by any of the prophets of Israel. Although the term Original Sin was not coined by St. Paul himself but it was based on concepts introduced by him and Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon during his controversy with certain dualist Gnostics also alluded to the concept. We, therefore, had to highlight the role of many other Christian fathers and finally of Augustine to give the doctrine a developed shape acceptable to most of the Christians. We may also restate that instead of any credible revelation from the Lord, the doctrine of fall and salvation had been the self-conceived theology of St. Paul. To uphold his viewpoint, St. Paul utilized all that was included in the Old Testament so that by erroneous interpretation of the same, he could lend support to the doctrines invented by him. It was with the same motive that he stated that:

16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **17.** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.¹⁵⁴

The main impact of such a statement could be nothing but to equate the certified commandments of God like those in the Decalogue and confirmed sayings of all the prophets from Moses to Jesus Christ with any fictional accounts, history, parables, literary works and poetry etc incorporated in the Old Testament. Hence, whatever suited to the new theology of St. Paul was interpreted in such manner that it may nullify or supersede the verified

¹⁵⁴ 2Ti 3:16-17 KJV.

commandments of the Lord and preachings of the prophets from Moses to Jesus Christ.

In view of this we find no credible support for diversion from the unchanging and everlasting teachings of faith and the highway to salvation rehearsed by the prophets from Noah to Jesus. We, therefore, treat the Christian theology of saving sacrifice, resurrection and redemption as pure innovations of St. Paul who had no authority from the Almighty or Jesus Christ to diverge from the unanimous and strict monotheistic teachings of all the true prophets of the Lord.

ii) St. Paul was not one of the apostles chosen by Jesus Christ. He had no chance either to see Jesus Christ or to accompany him anywhere in the Holy Land. He neither witnessed Jesus addressing the mobs nor had a single word to report from his preachings during his ministry on Earth. We find nothing in the New Testament to uphold St. Paul's own claim that Jesus Christ had ever chosen him as his apostle even to the Gentiles.

As regards Paul's conversion, the Gospels comprising of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John believed to have been written between 68 AD (Mark) and 110 AD (John) are silent about the same. According to most of the Christian scholars the probable date for the composition of Gospel of Luke is around 80–110 AD. Even this date is disputed among the scholars.¹⁵⁵ It is pertinent to note here that Luke made no reference to the vision pertaining to the conversion of St. Paul in the Gospel ascribed to him. We are, therefore, surprised to observe that the same Luke provides us with triple account of the vision of St. Paul in the acts of apostles attributed to Luke presumably about 50 years after the death of St. Paul.¹⁵⁶ Our doubts receive further

¹⁵⁵ Perkins, PHEME. *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*. Eerdmans (2009), p. 250-253.

¹⁵⁶ J. D. Crossan, Huffpost, 2012, s.v. "What Really Happened to Paul on the Road to Damascus?"

strength from the fact that none of the composers of the Gospels extant today knew anything about the vision of the conversion or appointment of St. Paul as an Apostle towards the Gentiles. None of the 14 Epistles ascribed to St. Paul contains any account of the vision stressed thrice by Luke who happens to be the only reporter of the same. As such, **it can be safely assumed that the vision was an afterthought of some unknown composers who inserted it into the Acts long after the deaths of St. Paul and St. Luke.**

Actually, St. Paul had been a persecutor of the followers of Christ for many years after the death of Jesus. He proclaimed his conversion or apostleship on the basis of a vision, he had experienced during his travel to Damascus. Most of the Christian writers believe that the said conversion occurred between 3-6 years after the death/ascension of Jesus Christ. Others widely differ from the said propagation e.g. Joel Carmichael observes that:

The very oldest record we have of Jesus' appearances after death is that of Paul; this was **at least twenty-five years after Jesus' death**, and could not very well be put in a vaguer form.¹⁵⁷

iii) St. Paul's Hebrew name was Saul. The triple account of the vision of his conversion makes us believe that Jesus had addressed him as Saul. Similarly, when Ananias came to restore his sight, he called him 'Brother Saul'. About the change of his name from Saul to Paul, we find no instructions from Jesus Christ. According to Luke it was at Cyprus that he was called Paul i.e. a Latin name instead of the Hebrew name with which Jesus has been reported having addressed him. Acts 13:9 states that:

Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.¹⁵⁸

The make believe statement quoted above is enough to point out that Paul had no regard for the Hebrew name with

¹⁵⁷ Joel Carmichael, *The Death of Jesus*, (Ringwood: Penguin Books Ltd, Australia, 1966), p. 168.

¹⁵⁸ Act 13:9 KJV.

which Jesus addressed him.¹⁵⁹ He preferred to be known as Paul i.e. the Latin name given to him by the Cyprians instead of the original Hebrew name given to him by his parents and endorsed by Jesus Christ and Ananias.

iv) Luke in the acts does not provide us any specific number of companions traveling with St. Paul. None of them had either been identified by name nor do we find any of them endorsing the event. The story of conversion is recorded thrice in different manners in the acts. Due to contradictions between the same we cannot rely on the truth of any of the reports. The first one is from Luke in Acts. He reports about Paul that:

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless,
hearing a voice, but seeing no man.¹⁶⁰

The 2nd instance pertains to Paul's own statement before the commander of the Roman troops who had intervened to save him from the infuriated mob. He said:

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but **they heard not the voice of him** that spake to me.¹⁶¹

The readers, therefore, come across two divergent accounts of the vision in the above. In the first vision reported by St. Luke the unnumbered and unnamed **companions of St. Paul heard a voice but saw no man**. In the 2nd vision **the companions saw the light but heard not the voice of him that spake to him**. Which one is to be accepted as a truth is hard to decide.

v) At the third occasion while defending himself before King Agrippa II, Paul has been stated to have said that:

13. At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. **14. And when we were all fallen to the earth,** I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest

¹⁵⁹ Acts 9:4.

¹⁶⁰ Act 9:7 KJV.

¹⁶¹ Act 22:9 KJV. and 26:1-18.

thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (...) **16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet:** for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;¹⁶²

The discrepancies in these statements are worth noting. In the first vision only Saul falls to the ground and no one else did fall with him. Even in the 2nd vision Paul alone falls to the ground but in the third narrative quoted above, St. Paul and all his companions fall to the ground. No one is blinded by the light while according to the first vision Paul had fallen blind and was unable to see anything. Jesus had to depute Ananias of Damascus to restore the sight of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:17).

vi) It is also strange to note that no companion traveling with St. Paul reported anything about the so-called vision of St. Paul. As regards Luke, he had neither been an eye witness of the event nor did he disclose the source of his information. With the exception of Acts, the New Testament or writings of early Christian fathers fail to provide us with any identification or other information about Ananias. The detailed study of the chapters from which three references have been quoted above are enough to point out contradictions making the report unreliable. As such, those who pin all their hopes on the said vision and teachings of St. Paul for salvation must reevaluate credibility of his apostleship.

vii) St. Paul also committed gross error by drawing a similitude between Adam and Jesus. While the Lord had created Adam without a father or mother, Jesus had been born of a woman without a human father. Adam was primogenitor of all human beings but Jesus had no progeny at all. Since, salvation through Jesus Christ had been suggested through faith in his Divinity and the vicarious sacrifice to expiate the sin of man it could not cover those who did not confess him as the third and co-equal and co-eternal part of the Triune God. All the earlier prophets and

¹⁶² Act 26:13-14, 16 KJV. For full details please examine acts 9:1-20, 22:3-21 and 26:1-18.

most of their followers had died before start of the ministry of Jesus. His crucifixion, therefore, failed to restore the degenerated nature of human beings who died earlier than him. Even among the later people, we have no evidence of the regenerated human beings among those who confessed him as god and savior of humankind.

viii) Only Adam and Eve could be responsible for the acts and deeds committed by them. They could neither effect any change in the original nature of their own creation nor had the power to transmit the said change to their progeny. The descendants can inherit only the genetic properties, natural instincts or tangible assets left over by their ancestors. Scientific discoveries do not lend any support to the presumption of genetic transmission of acquired habits or skills from parents to their offspring. Morgan observes that:

There is no conclusive evidence that the secondary automatism of habit is transmitted by heredity, so as to give rise to the primary automatism of instinct.¹⁶³

Mr. Adam Sedgwick, in a paper read before the British Association, 1899 and published in *Nature*, Sep 21, 1899, posed the question:

Is it possible by submitting an organism to a certain set of conditions, and thus causing it to acquire certain characters, so to modify its reproductive organs that the same characters will appear in its offspring as the result of the application of a different and simpler stimulus?¹⁶⁴

After a lengthy discussion, he himself answered that:

I think I may fairly answer this question in the negative.¹⁶⁵

ix) Gen 1:26-27 has it that:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all

¹⁶³ Lloyd Morgan, *Habit and Instinct*, (Ayer Publishing, United States, 1896) p. 325.

¹⁶⁴ F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p 182.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p 183.

the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female** created he them.¹⁶⁶

LORD blessed the man and abundantly empowered him to subdue everything on earth. Humankind was, therefore, created as crown of the creation of God who neither cursed them nor withdrew His favor from them. The Genesis had no concept of perversion in the nature of man or his condemnation forever. No mention of sin had been made in the narrative of creation, paradise story and the fall. As such, the theories emphasizing sinful nature of humanity debilitating them to do anything good for their salvation had been formulated only to assert indispensability of the Christ as the only savior of humankind.

x) God has always been extremely kind and compassionate towards humankind. He cannot be easily angered.¹⁶⁷ He does not hasten to punish or destroy anyone at the first or the second lapse. God said:

وَلَوْ يَخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِرُونَ.

If Allah were to punish men for their wrong-doing, He would not leave, on the (earth), a single living creature: but He gives them respite for a stated Term: When their Term expires, they would not be able to delay (the punishment) for a single hour, just as they would not be able to anticipate it (for a single hour)¹⁶⁸

xi) God takes action to chastise the transgressors only when they continue to disobey the commandments of the Lord for long time and refuse to repent in spite of repeated warnings through the prophets. Noah continued to warn his people for about six hundred years, but instead of repentance, they continued to insist on arrogance and rebellion against the Prophet and the LORD. Ultimately, they were drowned in the deluge. Noah was saved along with 3 of his sons, their families and about 80 other

¹⁶⁶ Gen 1:26-27 KJV.

¹⁶⁷ Exo 34:6, Num 14:18.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Qur'ān 16:61 (Yusuf Ali).

followers of the faith of Noah. Even after the deluge the Almighty did not forget to bless Noah and his sons as detailed in Gen 9:1-3. We also find similar blessings in the Qur'an:

The word came: "O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us, and blessing on thee and on some of the peoples (who will spring) from those with thee: but (there will be other) peoples to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end will a grievous penalty reach them from Us."¹⁶⁹

Wrath of God for all progeny of Adam and Eve is, therefore, an assumption against the revealed truth and the historical record of humankind on earth. No verdict of universal sinfulness was ever passed nor any curse inflicted on mankind as a whole. On this account, we find no consensus even among the Christian scholars. Most of them hold that acquired characteristics do not pass on from ancestors to their descendants. It is also believed that no one can be 'accountable to human or Divine justice except for that which he himself has done'. Genesis did not declare Adam or his progeny dead in spirit. The true position was perhaps opposite to that propounded by St. Paul as shall be discussed subsequently.

Scholars Disagree With St. Paul

After examining the scripture and other writings on the matter, Mr. F. R. Tennant arrived at the conclusion that the doctrine of Original sin cannot be traced back to the Old Testament. According to him:

The Old Testament supplies no traces of the existence, among the sacred writer, of any interpretation of the Fall-story comparable to the later doctrine of the Fall.¹⁷⁰

Some of the scholars, however, continue to assert that St. Paul derived every element of his doctrine from the Jewish

¹⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an 11:48 (Yusuf Ali)

¹⁷⁰ *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 93

literature of his time and also by interpreting the narrative of Adam's fall in a special manner. It is said that:

St. Paul's teaching as to the connexion of human sin and death with Adam's transgression is but one of the various possible interpretations of this narrative, slowly and tentatively reached after some centuries of Jewish exegesis and reflection. S. Augustine's fuller and more definite doctrine is but a developed form of one of the possible interpretations of the statement of S. Paul, arrived at after the preparation of further centuries of Christian speculation.¹⁷¹

The same writer believed that though Jehovist writings had the conception of an inherent bias to evil but it did not suggest that evil imagination was a consequence of Adam's sin entailed upon his children. It has, therefore, been recorded that:

But it must be observed that no hint is expressed as to the cause of this bias to sin which is regarded as ingrained in man from his youth. At least there is certainly no warrant supplied for the view that the evil imagination was a consequence of Adam's sin entailed upon his children, or even that it was transmitted by physical descent. Oehler's assertion, that this evil inclination is to be taken as a consequence of the fall, has no justification whatever from the Jahvist history. Such sinfulness as is there ascribed to men is neither, to use Schultz's expression, "a hereditary doom" nor something characteristic of man's *fleshly* constitution. Save for the slight hint in Gen. viii. 21 that the inclination to evil is not wholly a matter of man's choice, sin, with the Jahvist writer, is always a voluntary act or a habit resulting from such acts.¹⁷²

Doctrine of Original Sin a Necessity for a Redeemer

The doctrine of original Sin was unknown even to the Rabbinical Judaism. It was developed subsequently to support the need for the redeemer in the shape of Jesus Christ. Since then, the doctrine of Original Sin holds central position in the theology of the Christians:

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, p. 1.

¹⁷² *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 98

As evidence of the extremely important place in Christian doctrine assigned to original sin by many modern theologians, the following passage may be quoted:

What may be called the starting point of Christian theology, the doctrine of hereditary guilt and sin, through the fall of Adam, and of the consequent entire and helpless corruption of our nature, is entirely unknown to Rabbinical Judaism." Edersheim, *Life and times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1894, Vol. I. p. 52; cf. p. 165, where the doctrine of the Fall is said to be presented in the New Testament "as the basis of the need of a Redeemer."¹⁷³

The elaborate intricate and sophisticated discussions about human depravity and debility were the off-shoots of St. Paul's theory of salvation devised about 30 to 40 years after the death of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, there had been speculation prolonging over hundreds of years till an acceptable doctrine of Original Sin was formulated by St. Augustine in the fifth century A.D. Concluding remarks of the book titled '*The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*' by Mr. Tennant affirm the same:

That the development of the highly complicated doctrine of Original Sin was less the outcome of strict exegesis than due to the exercise of speculation: speculation working, indeed, on the lines laid down in Scripture, but applied to such material as current science and philosophy were able to afford.¹⁷⁴

It, therefore, transpires from the above that the Old Testament had no doctrine of Original Sin nor there existed any pessimism or puzzle connected with despaired destiny of man. Disobedience or violation of the commandments of the Lord was the only criteria of sin for them. Salvation lay in the individual's firm faith in the Lord, repentance from sinfulness and obedience to all His commandments. Each individual was responsible for his actual sin and had no recourse to get out of the mire except by turning to the Lord with resolve to do good in future and seeking forgiveness from Him.

¹⁷³ *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Footnote of p. 7

¹⁷⁴ *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 345

Masses of the Christians are unaware of the facts that the doctrine of the Original Sin had no support from the Genesis or the prophets in the Old Testament. Instead of making any reference to the sin of Adam the Prophets like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had preached that their followers must turn away from their own sinfulness and seek forgiveness of the LORD for their salvation. Only the devoted worship, lifelong perseverance on the straight path combined with constant entreaty for mercy and forgiveness of the LORD could ensure salvation in the Hereafter. St. Paul and his followers, however, took sharp diversion from the Highway of the prophets and suggested the shortcut to salvation by confessing Jesus Christ as the Lord and ultimate savior of mankind instead of the Almighty.

Relief from Accountability

By setting aside the Law of Moses and teachings of the prophets, the Christian fathers relieved their followers from the strict restraints of monotheism and the Law of the LORD. Confession by mouth that Jesus Christ was the Lord and ultimate savior of mankind was preached as the only way to salvation. Works under law were no longer necessary. Inheritance of sin and death from Adam served as a good excuse against personal accountability before the LORD. Monstrous role of Adam in the Garden and integrity of race in him were propagated fervently to arrive at the theory of human debility to do anything good to save themselves. The said debility, therefore, relieved the individuals from their responsibilities to discharge their obligations to the Lord. Charles Gore writes that:

Christianity has not been content with asserting that men in general or universally have proved themselves individually sinners. It has attributed to humanity an organic unity, by descent from a common origin—our first parents, Adam and Eve—and has, in part at least, accounted for the prevalence of sin by attributing the disordering of human nature or its partial corruption to the inherited effects of their fall, as it is

described in Genesis.¹⁷⁵

Mr. Gore also quoted a modern Roman Catholic writer as under:

"The whole dogmatic system of the Church revolves upon the **two poles of sin and redemption**, the old humanity and the new, *Adam and Christ*."¹⁷⁶

The said attribution of sin to first parents of mankind was the argument which denied the individual responsibility for sin. Human beings find good excuse to absolve themselves even from the liabilities of their personal and actual sins.

The imputation of sin to Adam and Eve brought great relief to the Christian converts from their accountability before the Lord. The expiation of sin through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ assured them of holiness, salvation and life everlasting. As such, there was no necessity to concentrate on worshipping the Lord or to glorify Him constantly. Absolute submission before the Lord, self-surrender before the will of God, life-long constant endeavor to do good and to refrain from the disobedience of the Lord, to give alms to the poor and dispense justice in the society were no longer the essential pre-requisites for salvation which could be attained merely through confession by mouth that Jesus Christ was the Lord and son of God who gave his life to expiate the sins of humankind.

The Christians propagate that salvation can be attained only through grace by faith in the divinity and saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Charles Gore, therefore, writes that:

And one of the most obvious of these is the idea and doctrine of the sinfulness of humanity. For among the most familiar of the titles of Christ is that of the Redeemer or the Saviour who "shall save His people from their sins" and that of the Reconciler, who by making atonement or propitiation reconciles us to God, and that of the Second Adam who

¹⁷⁵ Charles Gore, D.D., *The Reconstruction of Belief* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1930) p. 568.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 569.

inaugurates a new humanity regenerated and renewed in Him. These titles mean that mankind are in a state of unnatural bondage to sin or to the power of evil, and need to have their freedom restored to them by the act of God;¹⁷⁷ and that they are alienated from God and their true good and need to have a new status of sonship conferred on them by the grace of God; and that they belong to a race under condemnation and need incorporation upon a new stock.¹⁷⁸

It may be noted that all such concepts take us away from the unanimous teachings of the prophets of Israel. St. Paul, therefore, introduced new elements in theology which were unknown to humankind before him.

In the background stated above, constant efforts and intensive labor, time and money to discharge individual as well as collective duties towards the Lord and to exercise life-long care and self-control to avoid sinful acts had not been the priority or the main concern of the Christian preachers. The core issue before them had been the confession that Jesus Christ was the Lord and ultimate savior of mankind. Almighty Allah, His attributes and fulfillment of individual duties to serve the Almighty wholeheartedly lost their central and primary importance in the Christian Theology. All efforts were directed towards exaggerating the original sin of Adam to present a horrendous picture of his criminal role to corrupt the original nature of the creation of his progeny. Human inability to do anything good was highlighted to increase desperation in them. Indispensability, redemptive work and efficacy of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ were stressed for salvation of mankind. It was, therefore, natural that the Christian converts may exalt, glorify and worship Jesus Christ instead of God the father whom they painted as a relentless judge and vengeful tyrant whose sense of justice could not be appeased without exacting blood-sacrifice of an unblemished victim to expiate the sin.

¹⁷⁷ We note that even saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Roman cross failed to rectify the damage caused by Adam. Jesus failed to restore the original perfection of nature assumed by the Christians.

¹⁷⁸ Charles Gore, D.D., *The Reconstruction of Belief* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1930) p. 552.

Debates Replace Worship & Works Under Law

Debates about the same or different substance of the father and the son, different natures of Christ, discussions about the co-eternity and co-equality of three distinct persons in the Godhead, forming one God instead of three, had replaced primary obligations of worship and obedience to the Lord and His commandments. Ruinous effect of Original Sin of Adam, man's inability to do anything good for his own salvation and contrast of Adam's evil role with the saving sacrifice, benevolence and magnanimity of Jesus Christ were the main themes of discussions during the first millennium after the Christ. Worship in the church was limited primarily to the worship of Jesus Christ son of God, the risen Lord and the Ultimate savior of mankind. Effigy of crucified Christ including the cross itself were the main objects of worship in the church. Eucharist was the main sacrament of the Christians during which consummation of the consecrated bread and vine as body and blood of the Christ was made to commemorate the last supper. As such, instead of being a ritual of the People of Book, it was a diversion towards the rituals of the pagans. Besides this, Eucharist was a flagrant violation of the first three and the most important commandments of the Lord in the Decalogue confessed and preached by all the prophets from Moses to Jesus.

Allegiance to the Almighty, worshiping Him alone wholeheartedly and obedience to all His commandments were discarded as unnecessary for salvation of man. After the death of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, St. Paul and his followers abandoned their teachings about turning to the Almighty repentantly and to seek mercy and forgiveness from Him with a firm resolve to do good in future. They as such, left no role for the God worshiped by John, Jesus and all true prophets of the LORD either to judge or to forgive His creatures. God seemed to be deprived of the power to exercise direct control over His creatures. Everything had to be done through Jesus Christ.

It was also professed that salvation could not be attained by doing works of law (will of the God expressed in words). The only way to salvation was through grace of God by confessing the divinity and saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It was preached that:

God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. But by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free.¹⁷⁹

Obedience to all the commandments of the Lord was, therefore, of no help for salvation.

His choice is based on his grace, not on what they have done. For if God's choice were based on what people do, then his grace would not be real grace.¹⁸⁰

Works under law were not only useless but rather impediments in the way of salvation:

Those of you who try to be put right with God by obeying the Law have cut yourselves off from Christ. You are outside God's grace.¹⁸¹

Law of God (the father) was denounced as a killing law and condemned as a curse:

It is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant, which consists not of a written law but of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.¹⁸²

Those who depend on obeying the Law live under a curse. For the scripture says, "Whoever does not always obey everything that is written in the book of the Law is under God's curse!" Now, it is clear that no one is put right with God by means of the Law, because the scripture says, "Only the person who is put right with God through faith shall live." But the Law has nothing to do with faith. Instead, as the scripture says, "Whoever does everything the Law requires will live." But **by becoming a curse for us Christ has redeemed us from the curse that the Law brings**; for the scripture says,

¹⁷⁹ Rom 3:22-24 (GNB). See also Rom 10:9-11.

¹⁸⁰ Rom 11:6 (GNB).

¹⁸¹ Gal 5:4 (GNB).

¹⁸² 2Co 3:6 (GNB).

"Anyone who is hanged on a tree is under God's curse."¹⁸³

Thus instead of striving hard to fulfill one's duties towards the Lord and adopting self-restraint to avoid sinfulness, the Christian scholars in the later centuries devoted themselves to solve the problem of sin simply by explaining it away. As regards retribution for sin, they suggested transfer of liability from the guilty to the innocent one. Christian fathers also relieved their followers from personal responsibilities and their accountability before the Lord. Words of Charles Gore may help us understand the Christian view point contrasting Adam with Jesus:

We are fallen by our iniquity. Thus Adam and Eve stand for every man and woman, and the story of their fall is the true story of humanity and of what has been its ruin in every individual case. And over against the Old Adam, which is sinful humanity, stands the Last Adam, which is the sinless humanity. Thus in Jesus Christ I see humanity both restored to its true basis and its true relations, and not only restored but perfected in God.¹⁸⁴ And I apprehend the true character of my redemption only when I grasp it as a radical transference of my fundamental allegiance, and so of my whole being, from the stock of the Old Adam to that of the New.¹⁸⁵

It is pertinent to note here that contrast of Adam with Jesus and the assumption of sinful humanity against sinless humanity are based merely on the conjectures of St. Paul. The efficacy of baptismal regeneration, restoration of sinful humanity and its perfection in God has nowhere been manifested in the Christian community. The matter pertains to the realm of imagination than ground facts discernible on earth. The concept also lacks support from the words of God in the Old Testament or the words of Jesus Christ quoted by the Evangelists. As regards the "*transference of fundamental allegiance*", we find defection of Christians

¹⁸³ Gal 3:10-13 (GNB).

¹⁸⁴ The restoration and perfection in God is merely an assumption of the Christian fathers. Advent of Christ failed to bring any change in the human nature. Had they been restored or perfected in God, both sin and death could not have prevailed.

¹⁸⁵ Charles Gore, D.D., *The Reconstruction of Belief* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1930) p. 572.

from God the father to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Hence, instead of being monotheists, the Christian followers of St. Paul became polytheists like the Greeks, the Romans and many other nations in the Middle East.

INDISPENSABILITY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Although the imputation of the sinfulness of mankind to Adam and degeneration of the original nature of man is no longer acceptable to the scholars today yet it could not be discarded by the Christians simply because it was the only foundation to build thereon the Christian theory of salvation and redemption through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Had there been no Original Sin of Adam causing death and debility to do anything good for salvation, there would be no need for Christ as ultimate savior of humankind. Only the overall sinfulness and utter helplessness of humankind to do anything good was the condition creating the dire necessity of Christ. Inheritance of sinfulness from Adam and Eve also served as a genuine excuse for personal responsibility before the LORD. It aimed at providing the Christians with an escape from accountability for the actual sins committed by them. Being helpless in the matter, they had to depend entirely on the doctrine of salvation by confessing Jesus Christ as the LORD who gave his life to expiate all the sins of humankind. The doctrine of Original Sin and Salvation through Christ, therefore, relieved the Christians from lifelong obligations to worship the Lord and to obey His commandments diligently. Just a confession by mouth that Jesus was the LORD son of God who gave his life to expiate their sins was enough to guarantee the converts holiness, salvation and life everlasting.

Enticement of New Theology

Our review of the formulation and development of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin and Salvation clearly points out the inadequacy of the scriptural support for the same and remedy of sin as suggested by the Christian theologians. In spite of various contradictions and shortcomings in the concepts, the new theology had certain attractions for the converts. The concept of Original Sin as

an all pervading disease, and emancipation from sin through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, therefore, started gaining popularity gradually in the Roman world. On the one hand, it inculpated Adam and Eve as the malefactors inflicting sin and death on their descendants while on the other it suggested emancipation from the devastation just by confession through mouth that, Jesus Christ was the son of God who gave his life to expiate the sin of Man.

By confessing Christ as God and savior of mankind, the Christians could also enjoy freedom from constraints of the unbearable burden of Law of Moses, abstinence from unclean foods or strict embargo on drinking, idolatry, free sex, indulgences and nudity prevailing in the Hellenized society. The new faith was an amalgamation of Hellenism, Judaism and various other theologies in the Roman world. Besides extravagant promises without any cost, the new theology assured freedom from sin and death. Christianity was, therefore, a fascinating and amiable faith which provided **relief from slavery to the harsh God of the Old Testament and unbearable burden of the Law of Moses**. Being freed from fetters of the Law of Moses and obedience to the commandments of the LORD, the Christian converts could devote themselves to the wholehearted obedience and worship of the Roman Emperor. It, therefore, fulfilled the cherished desire of the Romans to create unity of faith and allegiance to the Empire. St. Paul's teachings of obedience to the authorities (Rom 13:1-7) as appointees of the Lord and advice to the slaves to serve their masters as they would serve the Christ was of utmost value for stability and permanence of the Empire. St. Paul had said:

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (Eph 6:5 KJV).

Obedience to Roman masters "*in Singleness of your heart*", therefore, seems to accord preference to them even over obedience to the Christ. The lesson was extremely beneficial to promote and prolong Roman rule in the World.

Being friendly to the Roman supremacy, Christianity became the most favored religion of the Roman despots. Realizing its benefits, they soon started to patronize the new faith. After declaring Christianity as State Religion, they proscribed all other faiths throughout the Roman World. Nonconformists were persecuted, eliminated or exiled from the Empire.

Christ as Remedy to Sinfulness and Death

Our discussion so far reveals that the Christian doctrine of salvation had no footings of its own. Prophets from Noah to Jesus Christ had been preaching worship and wholehearted obedience to God (Jehovah, El, Eloohem or by whatever good name they mentioned Him) as the creator, the evolver, the sustainer and the omnipotent savior LORD of the universe. God had, therefore, been the central theme and the sole authority to judge all His creatures. As against this, St. Paul's theology aimed at pushing the Almighty behind the new deities (i.e. Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost) introduced by him. His followers, therefore, continued to propagate that through his death on the Roman cross and resurrection, Christ had not only expiated the Original Sin of man but had also saved them from the evil consequences of sinfulness. In addition to the same, the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ had also conferred holiness and life everlasting on the human beings. Christ was, therefore, the Divine remedy to the problem of sin. As such, the doctrine of Original Sin forms the axis around which the theology of incarnation, redemption and the centrality of the Church continue to revolve. Basic presumptions in the theology can be enumerated in the following:

- 1.** That the LORD had created man in His own likeness due to which he possessed perfection in the original nature of his creation.
- 2.** That due to the so-called Original Sin, Adam and Eve had not only lost the sanctifying grace of the LORD but also

inflicted death and degeneration in the original nature of their creation. Man as such, stood debilitated to do anything good for his salvation.

3. That God the father was a relentless judge who had no option to forgive sins without expiation through blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb.

4. That due to the original sin of Adam and Eve, all their descendants were born as captives to sin and death. They had no unblemished person among them. Being unable to offer an unblemished lamb to expiate their sins, they had no way to salvation except confessing Jesus Christ as the LORD and ultimate savior of humankind. In addition to Jesus, they also had to acknowledge Holy Ghost as the most sanctified and dynamic person in the Trinity. Inheritance of sin and death from Adam and Eve causing degeneration in the nature of man is, therefore, the first postulate in the Christian theory of salvation.

5. Christian theology has no room for an oft-forgiving and a merciful God. In case, we confess the Almighty as extremely compassionate and loving LORD of the Universe, there remains no necessity for incarnation of God in Jesus Christ to redeem humankind from the disaster. The Christians insist that instead of faith in the Almighty and obedience to His commandments, it is the life in spirit and union with Christ that can set one free from Sin and Death. St. Paul asserts that:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.¹⁸⁶

The concepts recorded above were an innovation in the unanimous faith of the prophets of the religions revealed by the Almighty. The primary concern of the prophets had been to acquaint the people with the one and the only Lord God of the Universe. They also rehearsed to them the attributes of the Lord such as the sole Creator, evolver, sustainer and omnipotent administrator of the cosmos. Obedience to all the commandments of the Lord had been the obligations of the human beings. St. Paul and his

¹⁸⁶ Rom 8:2 KJV.

followers, however, took a sharp diversion from the faith of the Prophets. Emphasis was shifted from wholehearted worshipping the Lord and obedience to His commandments to introspection of the fatality caused by the Original Sin of Adam and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to save the human beings. Tatha Wiley, therefore, observes about St. Augustine that:

Like earlier theologians, Augustine's Primary concerns were in the person and work of Christ rather than in the matter of the first human sin itself. His appeal to an inherited sin, for example, reflects Augustine's desire to ground the universal necessity of Christ's redemption.¹⁸⁷

Human Prophets to Guide Human Beings

It is worth noting here that the LORD always deputed human beings to provide guidance to others of their species. Man had been created by Him by uniting spirit with the flesh. Taken separately neither flesh nor spirit can represent the man. We cannot discuss the properties of flesh or the spirit as separate entities in man. St. Paul's analysis of man through bifurcation into flesh and spirit does not pertain to the man created by the LORD. Paul's condemnation of flesh and sanctification of spirit, therefore, finds no support from the word of God or the teachings of the prophets. Roots of the said bifurcation can, however, be traced in the Greek, Hindu and Buddhist religious philosophy. As such, the conception of the elevation of spirit by killing the body is not based on the revelations from the LORD.

The LORD had been sending different prophets to different nations on earth.¹⁸⁸ Each of the prophets was a human being who spoke the language of the community to make the message clear to them.¹⁸⁹ They addressed their people in clear cut words having no ambiguity therein. The Law of the LORD and the covenants were made through specific

¹⁸⁷ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an 35:24.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Qur'an 14:4.

words.¹⁹⁰ **No Law had ever been conveyed through visions or dreams.** In view of this we observe that the theology introduced by St. Paul was neither the rehearsal of the faith of the prophets nor was it based on the word of God revealed to Jesus Christ. St. Paul based his theology on mysteries, mythology and Greek Logic instead of revelations or physical realities known to man. The psychological and spiritual Changes suggested by him did not yield to empirical or scientific verifications by human beings on Earth. No observational data was available to affirm the truth in his assertions. In view of easy salvation and extravagant promises made by St. Paul, however, the Christians did not bother about the validity or demonstrative proof of his preachings.

Man was neither the Creator of his body nor of his spirit. It was the Lord who created him in such fashion so that he may fulfill the purpose of his test and trial on earth. Man, therefore, had to prove his metal as a human being under the given circumstances. Any attempt to change the circumstances will be counted as a foul play on his part. In case he mutilates himself or tries to kill his body in his attempt to become like angels he violates the primary conditions of his test and trial by the LORD. No change in the original pattern of creation is acceptable to the LORD. The Deuteronomy has it that:

No man who has been castrated or whose penis has been cut off may be included among the LORD's people.¹⁹¹

The Creator never denounced the body or flesh nor did He split man in that manner. Divine guidance covered entire human personality including flesh, blood and the spirit. For this, human beings had to surrender their will before the will of the Lord. The LORD had made adequate provision for man to gratify all his appetites, lusts, needs and desires under the Law. Celibacy, starvation, annihilation of the

¹⁹⁰ Exo 34:27.

¹⁹¹ Deu 23:1 (GNB).

Since, St. Augustine had committed the offence against the said commandment we find no justification for his inclusion among the Christian divines and an authority on the Christian theology. Reference may also be made to Lev. 31:16-23.

body or refusal to enjoy permissible blessings were not enjoined by the Lord. The Lord did not prohibit satisfaction of genuine desires, enjoyments and pleasures of the world to those who abided by the Law of the LORD. He also did not command them to relinquish the world. God said:

O' ye who believe! make not unlawful the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for Allah loveth not those given to excess.¹⁹²

But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, **nor forget thy portion in this world**: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief.¹⁹³

This shows that the Lord did not demand from human beings a life on the pattern of the angels. The Christians acknowledge the angels as spirit beings. The LORD already had trillions of them who due to compulsion in their nature had no potentials or powers to transgress any commandment of the LORD. Angels being unable to commit any violation were exempt from any test and trial by the LORD. Billions of years after the existence of the angels, the LORD was pleased to create new species to be tested and tried under special circumstances provided to them on Earth.

¹⁹² Al-Qur'an 5:87 (Yusuf Ali).

¹⁹³ Al-Qur'an 28:77 (Yusuf Ali).

CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPTS

Foundations of Sin in the Genesis

Most of the Christians take Genesis as the determinant of the validity of the doctrine of Original Sin. We shall, therefore, be examining here the grounds of their reliance on the scriptural text besides verifying the infallibility of Genesis as the revealed word of God.

The credibility of the Genesis as the revealed word of God or ascription of its authorship to Moses is no longer upheld by the scholars today. Critics identify various authors and composers of the Genesis making their contributions during different periods of the history of Israel. The end product, therefore, is based not only on the revelations but also on legends, lore, historical reports and traditions of the ancient people incorporated in the OT by sages, priests and scribes of Israel who started recording the same from the age of kings and continued till the post-exilic periods. It is, therefore, evident that the books of the OT had neither been written by one man nor during the same period of time. We find contributions of numerous unknown authors in the OT from about 1280 BC to the pre-modern times. As such, contents of the OT can neither be ascribed to Moses nor taken as infallible words of God. It is, therefore, dangerous to rely on or to reinterpret Genesis 1:26 to assert that human beings or any other species had been created in the likeness of God.

An ordinary reader of the Genesis will be wonderstruck to detect two or perhaps three different narratives about the creation, the Paradise and the Fall in the first three chapters of the Genesis. One variant contradicts the other at many points. Although both versions seem to contain some strands of revelation yet the existence of missing links, incomplete, incorrect and overlapping accounts in the

narratives destroy veracity of the text. Many things remain unanswered in the stories of creation. Substantial parts of the versions consist of fabrication based on speculation and borrowings from mythology and ancient legends of Babylonia and pagan communities around Israel. These accounts are, therefore, mutually inconsistent and replete with contradictions and deficiencies. Gaps in the stories have no explanation for their existence.

The story of creation in Genesis I was geocentric. Man had been created in the likeness of God. Earth was supposed to be the centre of cosmos. God's spirit moved over the waters of the Earth. Sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies seem to have been created during the period, the LORD had His throne on Earth. The Genesis, therefore, presents a geo-centric concept of the Universe. Planet Earth gains primary importance in the Universe where the man in the likeness of God was the crown of His creation. The Sun, the Moon and heavenly bodies, thousands of times larger than the sun were relegated to the secondary importance as compared to the Earth. All such concepts stand rejected by the scientists during the enlightened age. Since there can be no inconsistency between the word of God and the creation made by Him, we cannot imagine of any contradiction between the words and the acts of the Lord. As such, the Jewish as well as the Christian scholars need to reconcile the difference between the revelations recorded by their ancestors and the facts revealed by the scientists.

The alternate account starting from Gen 2:5 did not contain blessings of the Lord for man in the Garden. It also does not assert man's likeness with God. Man had already been created and assigned his duties on Earth. The Garden too was in Eden in the East. It was not, therefore, in the heavens but on Earth. Critics, however, observe that major parts of both the accounts of creation are based on mythology and legends than history or revelation from the Almighty. As such, both stories of creation are fret with misconceptions and self-contradictory accounts containing

unscientific assertions. Trees instead of God were the fountainheads of knowledge and life everlasting.

The primordial adversary of woman i.e. the Serpent of mythology intruded into the Garden to misguide Adam and Eve. In spite of being a reptile, it had the power to speak. From where did it gain the said capability and when did it get deprived of the same, we do not know? The Genesis also fails to inform why the Lord did not prevent snake to enter the Garden. It also has nothing to disclose about the motive of the serpent to misguide Adam and Eve. How could he be taken as identical with Satan has also not been explained.

Human Likeness with God

Numerous complications have been created by the human hands in the theology of the Jews as well as the Christians due to the fallacious and defective concepts of God and His attributes. The assumption of man's creation in the likeness of God has, therefore, been the major stumbling block in their theology. Due to anthropomorphism ascribed to the Almighty, He seemed to share the limitations and shortcomings of man. God was *"walking in the garden in the cool of the day."*¹⁹⁴ Failing to see Adam and Eve in the hideout *"Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him: Where art thou?"*¹⁹⁵

Man's creation in the likeness of God denies God's transcendence over him. Mostly it was the God who needed to take precautionary measures against rebellious advancements on the part of man. God had to turn Adam and Eve out of the Garden lest they should also eat from the tree of life and live forever (Gen 3:22-23). God's apprehensions did not abate even after the said expulsion. Subsequently, He had to come down to see the city and tower of Babylonia. Apprehending some united action or

¹⁹⁴ Gen 3:8 KJV.

¹⁹⁵ Gen 3:9 KJV.

effrontery from humankind, the LORD mixed up their language and scattered them over the Earth:

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.¹⁹⁶

This shows that the concept of the creation of man in the likeness of God had created such a similitude in the human mind that they had forgotten about the infinite transcendence of the Almighty over the human beings. His likeness with human beings had deprived the Lord not only of His uniqueness but also His other attributes such as all-knowing, all-wise, all-seeing and omnipotent Lord God of the Universe. Chapter 17 of the Genesis records the 2nd appearance of the Lord to Earth. God appeared to Abraham to formalize the covenant of circumcision. Next year, the Lord in the company of two other pedestrians, appeared to Abraham in the plains of Ma'mar. Abraham entertained his guests in the following manner:

And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.¹⁹⁷

This reveals the Lord with the human attributes such as walking on foot and eating meat at Abraham's tent. This time the God had visited Abraham to announce the good news about the birth of Isaac. The Lord also said to Abraham that:

.... Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Gen 11:5-8 KJV.

¹⁹⁷ Gen 18:8 KJV..

¹⁹⁸ Gen 18:20-21 KJV.

It was perhaps due to His likeness with human beings that the Lord failed to know or see anything directly about the events at Sodom and Gomorrah. On learning about the same through some reports, the Lord had to come down to the earth to verify the facts. Such human speculations about the Almighty had, therefore, destroyed the image of God as the omnipotent, omniscient, all-seeing, all-wise Lord God of the Universe. This shows that the composers of the Genesis had no concept of the transcendent attributes of the Lord necessary to create sustain, evolve and administer the universe extending over the distances of billions and billions of light years. In case, the man had been created in the likeness of God we cannot deny possibility of the transposition of one into the other. God could incarnate Himself into a man and man into God. We cannot raise any objection about the deification of thousands of human beings including the Caesars of Rome during their lives on Earth or after their death. Similarly, no objection could be entertained into God's incarnation into man i.e. Jesus Christ or someone else. The only thing we need to do is to obliterate the line of demarcation between the religion revealed by the Lord and the religions invented by the human beings themselves. As against this, the Qur'an stresses on uniqueness and absolute oneness of the Almighty. In spite of creating numerous other things in pairs, He did not have a partner or co-equal with Him. This also implies that there can be no multiplication of Gods. The Qur'an asserts that:

(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: **there is nothing whatever like unto him, and He is the one that hears and sees (All things).**¹⁹⁹

No Mention of 'Sin' or 'Fall' in Gen 2 & 3

Our Christian friends will perhaps be astonished to note that the accusations of overall sinfulness of man can

¹⁹⁹ Al-Qur'an 42:11 Yusuf Ali.

nowhere be traced in the Genesis. The narrative of creation and fall does not contain the word 'sin' in it. It occurs for the first time in Gen 4:7 where the Lord addressed Cain as under:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.²⁰⁰

This was so because God knew that there had been no degeneration or perversity in the nature of Adam or his descendants. He, therefore, reminded Cain that he had all the potentials to do good deeds and there was no reason that the Lord would have rejected his virtuous deeds. God also did not say that the sin crouched at his door due to inheritance from Adam or Eve. It was rather due to the personal misconduct of Cain. The words of Lord "*thou shalt rule over him*" (sin) are extremely significant. **Had the man been captive to sin, the Lord would not have commanded Cain to rule over sin. God's admonition to Cain, therefore, refutes the theory of man's captivity to sin.** In view of this, we find no grounds for the theory of Original Sin, human's captivity or inheritance of the same as propounded by St. Paul and his followers.

Sin as Hereditary Taint

F. R. Tennant observes that:

But here again there is no implication of a belief in the fallen, as distinguished from the sinful, condition of human nature. Sin is apparently conceived as a hereditary taint, and, so far, as 'original' sin; but not in the sense that mankind shares in the sin, or the consequences of sin, of its first parent. The Origin of sinfulness, in the Last resort is left unexplained in the Old Testament..... There is no evidence that any connexion between human sinfulness and Adam's transgression had as yet occurred at all to the Hebrew mind. That the divine image was lost at the fall is contrary to the implications, if not to express statements, of the Old Testament. It is more than doubtful whether death was as yet regarded as caused by Adam's sin. The serpent is not identified, apparently, with Satan: though Satan already serves as an expedient for

²⁰⁰ Gen 4:7 KJV.

removing from God the responsibility for human evil which early Hebrew writers did not shrink from imputing to Him.²⁰¹

It is evident from the above that Mr. Tennant does not agree with man's inheritance of the tendency to sin. He says:

The Identification of this inherent tendency to sin with a corruption of human nature wrought once and for all by Adam, and *thence* naturally engendered in his posterity, alone is wanting of the constituent elements whose union is essential to the later doctrine of the Fall.²⁰²

The Old Testament had no concept of Original Sin. There is no doubt, however, that some elements of connection between Adam's fall and human sin and death were already prevailing in the contemporaneous literature of the Hebrews which was utilized by St. Paul to develop his theology suggesting solidarity of the race in one man Adam who was guilty of all the sins of his descendants. Infection of sinfulness was transmitted from him to all his descendants. The afore-stated attribution of federal responsibility to one man Adam was propounded by St. Paul to serve as basis for his doctrine of salvation. He drew a contrast between Adam and Jesus by exaggerating wickedness, depravity caused through his sin as against all encompassing grace, salvation, holiness and life everlasting through Jesus Christ.

It was perhaps, Ben Sira²⁰³ who provided the important link between certain Rabbinical speculations of the latter periods of the Old Testament and the Theory of Original Sin

²⁰¹ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 103-104

²⁰² F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 105

²⁰³ Jesus Ben Sirach was the author of the deuterocanonical Wisdom of Sirach and possibly the rabbinical Alphabet of Sirach. Ben Sirach, a Jew who had been living in Jerusalem, may have authored the work in Alexandria, Egypt circa 180–175 BCE, where he is thought to have established a school. (See Guillaume, Phillipe. "*New Light on the Nebiim from Alexandria: A Chronography to Replace the Deuteronomistic History*": sections 3 – 5: full notes and bibliography)

developed subsequently by the followers of St. Paul. Mr. Tennant quotes Ben Sira along with his own comments as under:

"Sin consists in the breach of explicit law rather than in an inward disposition expressed by the aims and affections of the man". His recognition of the universality of sin, again, finds no deeper expression than that "all are worthy of punishment." Sin is not conceived as an inherent spiritual disease clinging to man from his birth; and it is scarcely regarded as an external power. Such 'moral solidarity' as he incidentally predicates of the race consists only in the punishableness of the children for their parents' sins, and in the influence of example. Ben Sira's Attitude generally speaking is individualistic: and he magnifies personal freedom and responsibility."²⁰⁴

Death as the Wages of Sin

According to the Genesis, the LORD had forbidden Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge standing in the middle of the Garden. He warned him that '*in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*'.²⁰⁵ As against the above, the snake assured Eve that "*Ye shall not surely die*".²⁰⁶ Consequently, both Adam and Eve ate from the tree but they did not die as threatened by the LORD. **The snake, therefore, turned out to be more truthful than the Lord.** The Lord had failed to fulfill His words. Since, there can be no possibility of the non-fulfillment of the word of God, the non-fulfillment of anything ascribed to the Lord is in itself a proof of corruption in the text. As such, the phrase '*in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*'²⁰⁷ cannot be the word of God. Had the Lord pronounced death as the wages of sin, every sinner would have died, the day he committed the sin. History of faith denies any such tradition of the Lord. Adam and Eve did not die on the day they violated the commandments of God. There was no such effect even on the snake (or Satan) that was likely to live till the Day of Judgment. Cain the first

²⁰⁴ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 111

²⁰⁵ Gen 2:17 KJV.

²⁰⁶ Gen 3:4 KJV.

²⁰⁷ Gen 2:17 KJV.

sinner on earth also did not die the same day. There was no mention of any permanent perversion in the moral nature of Cain or transmission of depravity to his descendants. The Lord had avoided even to curse him directly. He was, therefore, cursed from the Earth in such a manner that the curse was shared both by Cain and the Earth.²⁰⁸ We also note that instead of inflicting immediate death on Cain, the Lord had sheltered him by prohibiting others to kill him:

And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.²⁰⁹

In view of all this, death cannot be termed as wages of sin as propounded by St. Paul.²¹⁰ Factually the mortals can live only up to the time predetermined for them irrespective of the fact that they committed some sin or not. The Qur'ān asserts that:

Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To Us must ye return.²¹¹

Say: "The appointment to you is for a Day, which ye cannot put back for an hour nor put forward."²¹²

To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation).²¹³

The life span of each person has been predetermined by the Lord. No one can die without Allah's leave. Death as such, cannot be the recompense of sin. God revealed that:

Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing. If any do desire a reward in this life, We shall give it to him; and if any do desire a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give it to him. And swiftly shall We reward

²⁰⁸ Gen 4:11-12.

²⁰⁹ Gen 4:15 KJV.

²¹⁰ Rom 6:23.

²¹¹ Al-Qur'an 21:35 (Yusuf Ali).

²¹² Al-Qur'an 34:30 (Yusuf Ali).

²¹³ Al-Qur'an 7:34, 10:49 (Yusuf Ali).

those that (serve us with) gratitude.²¹⁴

Allah, in fact, is so patient, kind and considerate that it is inconceivable about Him that He would get estranged from entire humankind just due to the first lapse of Adam and Eve whom He himself had created in such manner that both ways were open to them. Their creation with wavering condition was the requirement of their test and trial on Earth. Had the death been the wages of sin, the Lord would not allow them to live any longer after their transgression. God had always been extremely compassionate towards them. He proclaimed that:

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,²¹⁵

(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.²¹⁶

There had been no evidence to prove that the doctrine of Sin and Death had ever been operative on Earth. Wicked people usually enjoyed long lives on Earth while many of the righteous ones died in their youth. Almighty Allah, therefore, refutes the concept of death as wages of sin. It has been proclaimed that:

If Allah were to punish men for their wrong-doing, He would not leave, on the (earth), a single living creature: but He gives them respite for a stated Term: When their Term expires, they would not be able to delay (the punishment) for a single hour, just as they would not be able to anticipate it (for a single hour).²¹⁷

No one other than Allah can bestow life or inflict death on the people. Death is tied up with the respite given to each individual among humankind. The Lord created death as an end of the term fixed for the test and trial of each person in the world. After resurrection, every soul will have to account for his own deeds. Punishment or rewards will be

²¹⁴ Al-Qur'an 3:145 (Yusuf Ali).

²¹⁵ Exo 34:6 KJV.

²¹⁶ Deu 4:31 KJV.

²¹⁷ Al-Qur'an 16:61 (Yusuf Ali).

decided on the Day of Judgment in accordance with the result of the performance of each individual.

How can ye reject the faith in Allah?- seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return.²¹⁸

Death, therefore, can be taken only as the end of man's term on Earth after which, they will be liable to account for their conduct and be recompensed accordingly. As regards Adam and Eve, they never had the power to create or invent death.

It is up to the Lord to forgive a sinner or to punish him in any manner and at any time He may please.²¹⁹ In His absolute discretion, He may award the part or whole of the punishment on earth, in the Hereafter or in both. The earthly punishment can also be partial or complete as per discretion of the Almighty. Some people are punished immediately while in most of the cases, the punishment is postponed till the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an asserts that:

Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power;- He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;-²²⁰

Verily it is We Who give Life and Death; and to Us is the Final Goal-²²¹

It was much later than Moses that certain prophetic writings used the word 'death' to denote the disastrous consequences for the transgressors.²²² It, however, did not mean immediate or physical death of man. Instead of taking the death in the literal sense, therefore, we may better interpret it in the metaphorical sense denoting

²¹⁸ Al-Qur'an 2:28 (Yusuf Ali).

²¹⁹ Al-Qur'an 2:284.

²²⁰ Al-Qur'an 67:1-2 (Yusuf Ali).

²²¹ Al-Qur'an 50:43 (Yusuf Ali).

²²² Ezk ch. 18, Jer 31:29-30.

calamity and despair for the sinners. It also did not mean that those who committed no sin will live forever.

In view of the above, we find no grounds to believe that wages of sin is death, or the descendants will suffer from the sins committed by their ancestors.

The view that death was the outcome of the fall was general from the time of Ben Sira. It was he who taught that death was a consequence of the fall. Mr. Tennant writes that:

It must be concluded, then, that the only consequences of the Fall, for the human race, which were asserted in rabbinic teaching, are death and loss of the various supernatural adornments of Adam's life at its beginning. No diminished freedom of will, no permanent ascendancy of the *yezer hara* established for all generations, were ascribed to the first transgression. Nor do we find any reference to the idea of all the race being in Adam, or identified with Adam, when he sinned. Judaism possessed, indeed, the legend of the pollution of eve by Satan, and of the Taint transmitted by her to her posterity.²²³

(...) the main portion at the last of the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and 4 Ezra all definitely assert that physical death was introduced and caused by the fall of our first parents. This opinion, so general in apocalyptic writers, would seem, however, to have only gradually replaced the individualistic view in the rabbinical schools, if the slenderness of the information at our disposal warrants an inference on the point. The belief was adopted by S. Paul from his contemporaries, and so became general with Christian writers.²²⁴

Jesus Christ and the apostles chosen by him did not preach entrance of sin in the world due to transgression of Adam and Eve nor did they connect it with the sinfulness of the race. It has been observed that:

There is nothing in these apostolic statements, or in our LORD's recorded dealings with sinners, whether by word or deed, which *necessarily* implies that the individual's sinfulness is due to anything but his own acts and the habits thereby

²²³ *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, p. 176.

²²⁴ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, p. 244.

established, or to his voluntary reception of the influences of sinful society around him. S. Paul alone, amongst the first generation of Christian teachers, refers to the original entrance of sin into the human world and connects in any way, the sinfulness of the race with the first transgression.²²⁵

Mr. Tennant further observes that:

The notion that Eve alone was directly tempted by the serpent or Satan, and the belief that she was tempted to unchastity, appear to have been shared by S. Paul along with the apocalyptic, and perhaps rabbinic, writers of that period. If this be o, - and the matter cannot be argued here – we have very direct testimony to S. Paul’s acceptance of some of the popular Jewish speculations as to the Fall.²²⁶

Again, the narrative of Genesis, if it has here been rightly understood, does not teach that Adam became mortal because of his transgression, nor that his trespass was the cause of death to his descendants: much less does it imply that the first sin made all men sinners, in any sense. Both physical and spiritual death, or at least spiritual consequences of some kind, are attributed, however, as has already been shown, to Adam’s sin in early Jewish literature; and it is such Jewish teaching, which the apostle assumes, and which he supposes to need no proof, when he speaks, in Rom. V. 12 ff., of the connexion between Adam and the race as regards sin and death.²²⁷

Much more important is the relation of the Fall to human sinfulness: and on this S. Paul speaks but briefly, indefinitely and incidentally. He is not concerned expressly with insisting on the solidarity of mankind or with controverting individualism. He is expounding primarily the effects of Christ’s redemptive work for all; and in order to do so he falls back upon the familiar idea that Adam’s sin affected all, as an analogy. In so far as the origin of sin is alluded to in this passage, it is its historical, not its psychological, origin.²²⁸

²²⁵ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, p. 248-249.

²²⁶ Ibid, p. 251.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall & Original Sin*, p. 254.

We have repeatedly stressed that St. Paul was primarily interested to assert necessity of the redeemer in Jesus Christ. The speculation took many centuries till the Christian fathers attained some satisfaction about the theory of original sin developed by them. It served as foundation of a new theology of redemption through Jesus Christ as discussed in detail under the topic '*Gradual Development of the Doctrine*' in Ch. 3 of the book.

We also need to reiterate here that the Lord had created man with the predestination to install him as His vice-generent on Earth. The assignment envisioned independence of action and freedom to choose between numerous options keeping in view the guidance from the Lord. Man had to obey all the commandments of the Lord and **to establish His kingdom on Earth by implementing His law there.** To facilitate Man in his assignment, it was necessary to confer on him the powers to subdue everything on earth. Besides this, everything in the skies had to be made subservient to the cause of man. As for the earth, the Lord had already made requisite arrangements for humankind much in advance of their creation and placement there.

There is also no substance in the assertion that acquired merits or demerits of the parents can be transmitted to their offspring. In view of this, St. Paul's teachings about death as wages of sin, eternal condemnation of mankind and transmission of sinfulness and death to the progeny of Adam lacks any support from the Old Testament, teachings of the prophets or the facts established by the scientific discoveries.

Garden of Eden

We already said that Garden of Eden had not been mentioned in the first story of creation. It had been introduced only in the alternate story of creation which starts from Gen 2:5. The composers seem to be utterly confused about the events pertaining to earth against those occurring in the garden. As compared to the first story, the second version has greater contents of mythology and speculations against meager strands of revelation in it. The

speculative description of the Garden of Eden in the East, its rivers and other peculiarities do not match with any place on earth. No land can be identified with the imaginary description of the Garden of Eden. We are told that:

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.²²⁹

15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.²³⁰

The verses quoted above imply that God took the Man from some unidentified part of the earth and put him into the Garden He had planted in the East (on Earth). What was the purpose of shifting Adam to the Garden has nowhere been explained. Of utmost importance, however, is the Christian presumption that God had created Adam in His own likeness which denoted perfection as well as immortality of Adam. Theophilus (d. c. 183/185), while differing with others, speculates about the reason of man's transfer from earth to the paradise. In spite of his erroneous concept of man's evolution to divinity, his conjecture about the purpose of putting man into the Garden was not wide away from the mark. Instead of a whole truth, therefore, it can be taken as partly true. It is said:

We find first in Theophilus of Antioch, amongst Christian writers, the idea that Adam was created with "a middle nature," such that a course of advancement or development was needed before perfection could be attained. Thus: "And God Transferred him (Adam) from the earth, out of which he had been produced, into Paradise, giving him means of

²²⁹ Gen 2:8-9 KJV.

²³⁰ Gen 2:15-17 KJV.

advancement, in order that, maturing and becoming perfect and being even declared a God, he might then ascend into heaven in possession of immortality. For man had been made a middle nature, neither wholly mortal nor altogether immortal, but capable of either state."²³¹

We, therefore, find some grains of truth in the observation that **"Adam was created with a middle nature, such that a course of advancement or development was needed before perfection could be attained"**. This suggests that Adam and Eve were put in the Garden for the advancement of their knowledge and experience to deal with the vicissitudes of Satan. This part of the narrative has also been endorsed by the Qur'an.

Genesis does not reveal anything about the intended period of human stay in the Garden. According to certain extra-biblical sources, man's duration of stay did not exceed a few hours. Some Islamic scholars also express opinions akin to that. They believe that man's stay in the Garden was from morning till afternoon.²³² Besides this, we observe that the Genesis fails to tell us the purpose of shifting Adam and Eve to the Garden when the Lord already had assigned duties to them on Earth (Gen. 1:26-3). We also cannot reconcile with the Idea that the trees instead of the Lord, were the source of life-everlasting and the knowledge of good and bad. The Genesis does not disclose God's wisdom to prohibit Adam and Eve from eating the fruits of the trees He had placed in the Garden. To get rid of the mythological stories, therefore, we need to turn to revelations of the Lord accurately preserved in the Qur'an.

Keeping in view the contents of the narratives of both the stories of creation in the Genesis, we conclude that Adam was neither created in the Garden nor was he predestined to live there forever. The Lord had created him to live on earth under the blessings showered by Him on man and his

²³¹ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 280

²³² *Tafseer-e-Qurtubi*, Translated by Idara Zia-ul-Musannifeen Bhera (Lahore: Ziaul-Qur'an Publications, 1st Edition 2012) 7th Vol. pg. 635. See also al-Muharrir Al-Wajeez Vol. 4, p. 402.

environments.²³³ Since, the Lord had predetermined for Adam to serve independently as His vice-gerent on Earth, He was pleased to impart him some initial training before his posting on the position of independence there. Transitory stay was perhaps the reason that the Lord did not bless Adam in the Garden. Had the Lord blessed him there, the serpent could not have succeeded to get him expelled from there.

Although the first narrative confirms creation of man in His own image, male and female on Earth²³⁴ yet the alternate story makes us believe that it was during Adam's placement in the Garden that God created Eve from the rib of Adam (Gen 2:21-23). Ignoring other discrepancies, we proceed to observe that the serpent enticed Eve to eat from the forbidden tree as described in the following:

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.²³⁵

According to the narrative produced above, Eve was the first to eat from the forbidden tree and then induced Adam to eat of it. Consequently, both Adam and Eve lost their apparel of bliss so that their shames were evident to them. The Lord also announced punishment to the snake and the woman as recorded in Genesis 3:14-16. Adam too was punished and reprimanded in the following manner:

And unto Adam he said, **Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife**, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it:

²³³ Gen 1:27.

²³⁴ Gen 1:27

²³⁵ Gen 3:1-5 KJV.

cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.²³⁶

Man was innocent and novice at the time of his creation. God had created him with the capabilities to bide by His guidance or to lean towards fulfillment of his own desires and lusts. Man also suffered from inconstancy and forgetfulness. Humankind had no experience of the guise and guile of Satan which could lead them to fatal consequences. Adam also did not know how to get rid of the calamity wrought by his own hands. Being fully aware of the shortcomings of man, the Lord placed him in the Garden for probation so that he may have firsthand experience of the misguidance of Satan and learn to get rid of his snare through repentance before the Lord and seeking His forgiveness and mercy for salvation. Adam was not, therefore, transferred out of Garden till he had learnt to seek forgiveness of the LORD in the event of any transgression committed by him.

Adam and Eve erred to eat from the forbidden fruit only due to their forgetfulness of the commandment. They had no predetermination to disobey the Almighty. When asked to show cause, they did not enter into futile arguments with the Lord. Instead of defending their inequities, they plainly confessed their guilt, and beseeched mercy and forgiveness of the Lord with utter humility on their part. The Almighty turned to them graciously and forgave their fault there and then. Adam's utter dependence on the Lord and his humility also earned appreciation from the Almighty. No doubt Adam failed in his initial trial in the Garden, but when asked to show cause, he reacted in a manner entirely different from Satan. Satan had willfully flouted the authority and also behaved arrogantly when asked to show cause. Man, on the other hand, confessed his guilt plainly with utter humility on his part and sought mercy and guidance of the

²³⁶ Gen 3:17-19 KJV.

LORD for his future conduct on earth. That was the cause of his being chosen for the responsible assignment there.

By their immediate confession of guilt and turning to the Lord repentantly they proved their eligibility for the assignment to serve as vice regent of the Lord on earth. Thus they turned out to be successful during their training in the Garden. It was therefore after the episode of their seeking mercy from the Lord that He chose Adam as His first prophet on earth. Hence, instead of having any stain of sin on him as presumed by the Christians, Adam and his progeny had all the blessings of the Lord. The same is evident from the fact that great prophets of the Lord including Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses Jesus and Muhammad were raised from the descendants of Adam.

Ignoring for the moment, the misogynistic concepts and the misplaced curse on earth, we shall focus ourselves on the true cause and impact of fall.

Fruit of the Forbidden Tree

The assertion that God had created man in His own likeness had been contradicted by the Genesis by stating that man lacked eternity and also the knowledge of good and bad. God was so averse of man's acquiring knowledge that the very first prohibition from Him was to forbid him eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

Acquisition of knowledge, therefore, remained a forbidden fruit for the Christians for about 1400 years.

Although the Israelites did not take the said commandment seriously yet the Christians did their utmost to prevent all sources of knowledge to man except the doctrines of the church. Acquisition of knowledge and rational thinking remained under taboo in the Christian world for about 1500 years since the death/ascension of the Christ. They tortured and executed a large number of scholars and scientists who endeavored to explore the facts. As soon as they differed with the doctrines of the church, they had to be executed

or punished severely. The church authorities curbed free thinking, rationality and research. People had to believe blindly in the the doctrines of the church. Those who differed from the dogmatic opinion were declared skeptics or heretics and put to death.

As against the said trend of the Christian world, the Qur'an stresses on enhancement of knowledge again and again. The Lord had guided the Prophet ﷺ to pray:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

And Say: "O my Lord! advance me in knowledge."²³⁷

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, made it compulsory for Muslim men as well as women to seek knowledge as far as possible for them. He said:

"Seeking knowledge is compulsory (fard) on every Muslim Man and Woman" (Sahih Ibn Maja, Hadith No. 224).

The Holy Prophet also beseeched the Lord that:

اللهم ارني حقيقة الاشياء كما هي

O my Lord show me the things in their true form.

Even other religions of the world did not forbid inquiry into the truth. As an explanatory note to the first verse of Bhagavad-Gita it has been said:

Dharmakscire: in the field of righteousness. The quality of deciding what is right or dharma is special to man. Hunger, sleep, fear and sex are common to men and animals. **What distinguishes men from animals is the knowledge of right and wrong.**²³⁸

The Qur'an has stressed the use of intellect, reasoning and acquisition of knowledge to such an extent that **the term علم (knowledge) has been mentioned about 824 times in it.** The Prophet and his followers had, therefore, been abiding by the said commandment of the Lord (Al-Qur'an 20:114). It is also said that

²³⁷ Al-Qur'an 20:114, Yusuf Ali.

²³⁸ The *Bhagvadgita*, (London; George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House Museum Street) pg. 79.

throughout his life, the Prophet never implored for increase in anything except علم (Knowledge). The said prayer was not restricted to religious knowledge but also included all types of knowledge to discover the secrets of nature and the truth about creation of heavenly bodies, and all living creatures in the universe. God said:

Say: "Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation; so will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things.²³⁹

Cause and Impact of Fall

Since the so-called 'fall of man' had a direct bearing on the life and future destiny of man, therefore, we need to reexamine the narrative of the Garden and the fall. We said earlier that the account of punishment had ended with verse 19 of Gen 3 without pronouncement of any sentence of death on Adam or Eve. The narrative contains neither a reference to any perversity in the nature of our first parents nor about transmission of a corrupt nature to their posterity. A short break i.e. Gen 3:20-21 intervenes the announcement of punishment to Adam and Eve with their expulsion from the Garden. Apparently, the so-called expulsion was caused neither due to any degeneration in the nature of Adam and Eve nor was it prompted by a motive to punish the wrong doers. It was rather due to venturesome act of Adam and Eve to attain likeness with the gods. The audacious step of man had put the Gods on alert lest man should also eat from the tree of life to live forever. Obviously, the expulsion of man from the Garden was caused due to increased level of awareness and spiritual evolution than any perversity or defilement in his nature:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden

²³⁹ Al-Qur'an 29:20

of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.²⁴⁰

The cause of fall transpiring from Gen 3:22 was man's self-acquired increase in knowledge, awareness and experience which brought positive improvement in the original nature of his creation. God or gods stood scared of the audacity of man lest he might also eat from the tree of life and live like gods forever. **As such it was not due to any degeneration or perversity in the nature of man that the God turned Adam out of the Garden. It was exactly reverse of the same.** We, therefore, fail to know from where St. Paul and his followers deduced perversity in the original nature of man's creation or infliction of death due to the original sin as foundation of the Christian creed.

Apparently, the Gods stood scared of the astounding improvements of Adam and Eve over the original nature of their creation. It was to forestall the future adeptness of humankind that they had to expel them from their presence. Besides turning them out of the Garden, the gods also had to impose another check to stop the unscrupulous ventures of man:

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.²⁴¹

Unluckily, God again failed to fulfill His words. Readers of the Bible may themselves note a large number of human beings living much more than 120 years till many thousands of years after the said verdict of God.

Even the injection of the sons of God on earth (Gen 6:1-2, 4) coming unto the daughters of men who also bore children to them brought no relief to God.

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Gen 3:22-23 KJV.

²⁴¹ Gen 6:3 KJV.

²⁴² Gen 6:6 KJV.

Even this determination of God could not be carried out by Him. Only the wicked people were drowned into the deluge while Noah, his sons with their families and various species of all types of animals and birds etc. were saved to continue life on Earth. God's blessings also did not come to an end there. God no doubt eliminated the rebellious but He did not forget to bless Noah and his sons²⁴³ in the manner He had blessed Adam and Eve before them.²⁴⁴ In addition to other blessings, the Lord also gave them the Law and made the covenant as detailed in Gen 9:2-16. **Such special concerns of God for Noah and his progeny repudiate any concept of the estrangement of God from humankind or His wrath against them.**

According to Genesis, it was on the sixth and the last day that the Lord created mankind in His own likeness. He created them male and female, on earth and from the dust of Earth. As such, how could there be any resemblance of a creature from dust with the Almighty enjoying supreme transcendence over each and everything else. Genesis contains that:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.²⁴⁵

This leaves no ambiguity about the fact that mankind was created with the predestination to abide on earth and to fulfill their assignments there. The Lord had already made all the provisions for them on earth. They were blessed to multiply and to subdue everything on earth. The first narrative of creation was, therefore, complete in itself. It

²⁴³ Gen 9:1

²⁴⁴ Gen 1:26-36

²⁴⁵ Gen 1:28-29 KJV.

had no garden, the serpent, the transgression or the fall of man.

The second narrative, apparently from a different source, repeats certain contents of the first narrative but adds the plantation of the Garden, man's placement there, the embargo on eating from the tree and the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve. It, however, reveals nothing to disclose the necessity of shifting Adam to the garden abruptly against the original plan of the Lord to keep him on Earth. As against this the Qur'an clearly revealed that humankind had been created with the predestination to be placed as vice-gerents of the Lord on Earth. It was an assignment of great distinction. Satan (a Jinn) had, therefore, expressed his indignation against the choice of the Lord and refused to obey the commandment of the Lord to bow before man.²⁴⁶ He further challenged the Lord that:

16. He said: "Because thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way: **17.** "Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: Nor wilt thou find, in most of them, gratitude (for thy mercies)."²⁴⁷

Adam, as such, had to discharge duties of great responsibility independently. He was a novice having no experience of the vicissitudes of Satan the rebel who had vowed to misguide Adam and his progeny. In view of this, it was hazardous for humankind to be placed on the predestined position without initial training for the same. Almighty Allah put Adam into the garden for probation so that he may have some experience of the vicissitudes of Satan and learn to seek mercy and forgiveness of the Lord to get rid of the tragedy. The Garden served as an academy for Adam and Eve. Adam's subsequent placement on earth as vice-gerent of the Lord was, therefore, his exaltation and posting on the position predetermined for him. We cannot, therefore, ascribe any degeneration or depravity to man on this account. We also find no justification for wailing over the fall of man or to lament the loss of the original

²⁴⁶ ²⁴⁶ Al-Qur'an 7:11-13.

²⁴⁷ Al-Qur'an 7:16-17 Yusuf Ali.

sanctifying grace as misconceived by the Christian followers of St. Paul. We also observe that instead of denouncing the humankind, the Lord God had been showering His blessing by raising the most exalted prophets like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad ﷺ among them.

TRANSITORY GODS AND BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

Transitory Gods

Although the Torah and the prophets of the Lord up to Jesus Christ had always been preaching the absolute oneness and eternity of the Lord yet many among the Israelites diverted to worship numerous ever-changing Gods of other nations around them. This was against the standard faith of Israelites which had no room for any deity other than the Lord.²⁴⁸ Later on the eagerness of the Israelites to assert their supremacy over other people in the world did not allow them to share their God with other nations. They, therefore, interpreted the Monotheism to denote **YHWH as the one and the only God of the Israelites**. Other nations, however, had their own gods which were demi-gods or lesser gods as compared to the Lord God of Israel. Such people could, therefore, be termed as henotheists than monotheists as per teachings of Torah.

St. Paul had been the first theologian of the revealed religions to expand the unity into Trinity by suggesting God the father, Jesus as son of God and the Holy Ghost as the third person in the Godhead. His followers had thereafter been continuing futile efforts to prove co-eternity, co-equality and co-substantiality of all the three persons in the Triune God. It is worth noting here that Jesus the 2nd person in the Trinity is not the actual name of the Holy Prophet 'Yehoshua' which means "Yahweh saves". Instead of the actual name, therefore, Jesus is the Latin version of 'Yehoshua'. The *Wikipedia* explains that:

The name Jesus is derived from the Latin Iesus, a transliteration of the Greek Ἰησοῦς (Iēsoûs). The Greek form is a rendering of the Hebrew ישוע (Yeshua), a variant of the earlier name יהושע (Yehoshua), or in English, "Joshua",

²⁴⁸ Exo. 20:2-5.

meaning "Yah saves". This was also the name of Moses' successor and of a Jewish high priest in the Old Testament.

The name Yeshua appears to have been in use in Judea at the time of the birth of Jesus. The 1st-century works of historian Flavius Josephus, who wrote in Koine Greek, the same language as that of the New Testament, refer to at least twenty different people with the name Jesus (i.e. Ἰησοῦς). The etymology of Jesus' name in the context of the New Testament is generally given as "Yahweh is salvation."

It is, therefore, evident from the above that the very name of the Prophet meant that "Yahweh is salvation". It was, however, the ingenuity of St. Paul that he replaced the Almighty with the Prophet by suggesting him as salvation for humankind. As such, those who believed and followed the Prophets will be covered by the grace of the Almighty and those who follow St. Paul may also hope to be covered by the Pauline grace instead of the grace of the Lord God of the Universe.

St. Paul also seems to have believed in the 4th God i.e. the God of the age as an arch enemy of the Almighty. He said:

The God of the age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.²⁴⁹

This God of the age also mentioned as God of this world and the prince of this world was no one else than Satan who according to St. Paul had blinded the minds of those who did not believe in him. St. Paul however, had nothing to tell us about the beginning or end of the tenures of 'the gods of different ages'. Some modern Christians, therefore, came forward to suggest superannuation and retirement of Gods. After being silent about the eternity of the Lord, they ascribe the time of the time of the Old Testament as the age of the Father. During the time Jesus was on earth, it was the age of the Son. Since the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is the omnipotent, sovereign and benevolent authority ruling the world in the present age. The Holy Spirit, therefore, looks after the welfare of the Christians since

²⁴⁹ 2Cor 4:4, *The NIV Study Bible* [New International Version], (Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, USA 1985)

then. It is, therefore, ridiculous to discover that the said omnipotent sovereign and benevolent authority is at the disposal of the priests who can infuse it into the people baptized by them. Anyhow, this concept of transitory potentates replaceable by others at any time is evident from the following:

The Holy Spirit is the most powerful Being in the world today. The time of the Old Testament was an age of God the Father. **During the time that Jesus was on earth it was an age of the son.** Now we are living, since Pentecost in the age of God the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says that the moment you accepted Christ as Savior the Holy Spirit took up residence in your heart. Your body is now "the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you."²⁵⁰

All such propagation openly contradicts the Old Testament and the prophets who preached the sovereignty and eternity of one and the only God of the universe. **The changing of the tenures and authority of gods in the manner stated above also conflicts with the doctrine of coequality, coeternity and co-substantiality of three persons in the Trinity.** It is, however, believed by them that Jesus was born as son of God in about 6 B.C. and died in about 29 A.D. His age tenure, as such, was limited only to 35 years while his missionary period did not exceed 3 or 4 years. According to Billy Graham, quoted above, we are living in the age of God the Holy Spirit since the Pentecost. Hence, God the Holy Spirit introduced by St. Paul had been the ruling authority for about 2000 years. Jesus had the shortest tenure i.e. 3 or 4 years as compared to other two persons in the Godhead. All this, knocks the bottom out of the concept of the co-equality and co-eternity of three persons composing the Triune God.

We lack the knowledge to describe the time period to explain the eternity of the Lord. Scientists start counting time w.e.f. the Big Bang which, according to them, occurred about 13.7 billion years ago. As regards the

²⁵⁰ Billy Graham, *Peace With God*, (New York: PERMABOOKS, 1958) p. 171-172

prophets, they have always been believing in one and the only Lord God of the Universe which had neither a beginning nor an end. Even Christians up to the Nicene Creed (325 AD) had no concepts of different gods of different ages. Athanasius, therefore, observed that:

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God. The Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. And in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another, but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.²⁵¹

Let our Christian friends reconcile the statements of Athanasius and Billy Graham quoted earlier. We, however, observe that truth cannot contradict the truth. God cannot be the author of confusion. Hence, self-contradictory assertions can better be termed as erroneous assumptions of the human beings than the word of God. According to the universal preachings of the Prophets, there had always been the one and the only Lord God of the Universe from all eternity and having no end at all. He had been the sole Creator, sustainer, evolver and administrator of the Universe since all time in the past and to endure forever in future. Polytheism and transitory gods, therefore, have nothing to do with the religions revealed by the Almighty.

Baptism of Repentance

Prophets of Israel from Moses to Jesus, did not indulge into theological discussion about the origin of sin. They came with clear-cut teachings that the people must believe in one and the only Lord God of the Universe. People must depend entirely on Him and refuse to worship idols or Gods other than the Lord. Devoted worship of the LORD and obedience to His commandments had been the nucleus of their teachings. In case of any default in duty or transgression against the commandments of the Lord, they guided the people to turn to Him repentantly to seek mercy and

²⁵¹ W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology* - Article 1 (Eugene: WIPF and Stock Publishers, 2005).

forgiveness from Him. **Hence, instead of trying to change gods, they must change themselves by obeying the Lord diligently.** Thousands and Thousands of prophets after Moses continued to rehearse the same unchanging message of the Almighty to the people of Israel. Towards the end of the period of the prophets, John the Baptist came as the penultimate warner to the Israelites. He exhorted them to repent and to turn away from their sins before they were chastised by the LORD. Mathew, therefore, records that:

At that time John the Baptist came to the desert of Judea and started preaching. Turn away from your sins," he said, "because the Kingdom of heaven is near!"²⁵²

So John went throughout the whole territory of the Jordan River, preaching, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins."²⁵³

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.²⁵⁴

It is, therefore, clear from the above that John's Baptism was an oath of allegiance to one true God. People had to repent of their sins and to turn to the Lord for His mercy and salvation from sinfulness. Both John and Jesus were giving final warning to the people against wrath and judgment of the LORD. Keeping in view the narrative of Luke (3:7-9) quoted above, we cannot interpret Kingdom of Heaven as a blessing from the LORD. It must be taken as a

²⁵² Mat 3:1-2 GNB. It is worth noting here that instead of good news, St. John the Baptist was admonishing the people of Israel to repent and to mend their ways to escape judgment and severe chastisement by the LORD due to His wrath against the transgressions being committed by the people of Israel.

²⁵³ Luk 3:3 GNB.

²⁵⁴ Luk 3:7-9 KJV.

warning of severe judgment and chastisement for the rebellious transgressors in the community. John and Jesus, therefore, taught their followers to repent of their sins than to get rid of it merely by explaining it away. Mathew records about the multitude coming to John:

They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan.²⁵⁵

John was a precursor of Jesus Christ who introduced the ritual of baptizing the people as a token of penitence from sinfulness and turning to the LORD with a firm resolve to do good in the future. Ritual washing in the river, therefore, signified nothing else than repentance from sin and initiation into righteousness. Besides numerous other people, John also baptized Jesus Christ in the same manner. **Baptism as such, had no reference to death or burial with Christ. It also did not imply resurrection or living by Christ's life.** All such suggestions were later innovations of St. Paul without any support from a revelation or preachings of Jesus Christ during his life on earth. Similarly, immunity from sin and the infusion of Holy Spirit into mankind through baptism was just a psychological assurance making people believe in a change of nature which could not be demonstrated as a hard fact of life.

Jesus too had been rehearsing the message of repentance to his followers. There is no evidence to the fact that he baptized anyone himself or the disciples chosen by him baptized his followers. The genuine disciples of Jesus knew nothing about baptizing anyone into mystical body of Christ. It was long after the apostles that the Christian followers of St. Paul changed the ritual of repentance before the Lord to baptism through the priests affecting unification into the Christ and reception of Holy Ghost. Instead of a supreme being, therefore, the Holy Ghost seemed to be a spirit at the command of the priests. The people could receive the Holy Ghost from the priests who had the prerogative to gift it to the people being baptized

²⁵⁵ Mat 3:6 GNB.

by them. As such, it is a unique method of conferring or receiving the Almighty God.

Baptism of John had no concern with the original sin of Adam and Eve nor did he mention anything about efficacy of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ to expiate the sins of the individuals. Such concepts were developed and introduced by the Christian fathers either by changing the text or interpreting certain assertions in the Old Testament in a special manner during 400 years after the deaths of John and Jesus. It was perhaps under the influence of St. Paul that pseudo-Luke inserted in the Acts of the Apostles that:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.²⁵⁶

All this shows that baptism in Christianity had neither been based on the practice of St. John the Baptist nor on the teachings of Jesus Christ. St. Paul had, therefore, been the earliest propounder of Baptism effecting remission of sins and unity into Christ. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* records that:

In Romans (ch. 5) Paul showed that sin permeates the whole human race through death, but its power is not equal to Christ's grace and justice: "For if by reason of the one man's offense death reigned through the one man, much more will they who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of justice reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. . ." (5.17). By being baptized into Christ's death and resurrection man is freed from sin and begins to live by Christ's life. "For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (6.4). Thus through Baptism the Christian is conformed to Christ so that after Baptism the "old man" and the "body of sin" cease to be the instruments of sin. Now the Christian has a new "mode of being," a new "mode of acting." He is no longer in the service of sin; the Holy Spirit is present in him. The new man is

²⁵⁶ Act 2:38 KJV.

inspired, motivated by the Spirit to fight against the flesh; he passes from the carnal state to a spiritual state.²⁵⁷ The opposition between the flesh and spirit indicates the nature of sin, for sinful flesh is thus described as God's enemy while the spirit is God's gift. Sin, then, is a personal force by which man is opposed to God, and sinful deeds are its works.²⁵⁸

That Jesus did not himself baptize anyone is also evident from the fact that Apollos had no knowledge of any baptism except that of John.

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.²⁵⁹

This Apollos was much opposed to St. Paul who told the Ephesians that:

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.²⁶⁰

It was about 25 years after the death/ ascension of Jesus Christ that St. Paul a Jew and proud citizen of Rome started to present himself as apostle of Jesus Christ towards the gentiles. The theology introduced by him aimed at destroying the monotheistic creed and Law of Moses by introducing Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as two additional persons in the Godhead. He interpreted the narrative of fall in such a manner that Adam was depicted as a monstrous criminal against all his descendants who were doomed to everlasting desperation unless they were saved through confession of the divinity and vicarious

²⁵⁷ Baptism into death and resurrection as stated here can only be a psychological feeling than a matter of fact. Similarly, the so called new man's transmutation from carnal to spiritual state can also be nothing else than an illusion. No real change in nature or conduct has been discerned in the regenerated Christians.

²⁵⁸ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Ed. (Washington D.C: The Catholic University of America, 2003) Vol. 13, p. 145-146, 'sin'

²⁵⁹ Acts 18:24-25 KJV.

²⁶⁰ Act 19:4-5 KJV.

sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To contrast him with Adam, St. Paul depicted the later as an arch-villain against his own descendants. He presented Jesus as antitype of Adam to restore the original nature of creation that had been lost due to the Original Sin of Adam.

The verses of Romans, Ch. 5 quoted below, therefore, serve as the nucleus around which the Christian fathers developed their doctrines of sin, death and salvation. St. Paul argues:

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.²⁶¹

Human beings have no justification to follow the preachings of St. Paul which divert them not only from the revelations of the Lord but also from the preachings rehearsed unanimously by the Prophets. Baptism into Christ's death

²⁶¹ Rom 5:12-21 KJV.

and resurrection to live by Christ's life are mere psychological assumptions which cannot be scrutinized as verifiable facts or observable realities of life. Christianity has utterly failed to demonstrate regeneration of humankind by restoration of the so-called original perfection of nature through baptism into Christ. Baptism, therefore, fails to bring any permanent change in the nature of man.

CREATION OF MAN AND THE FALL

Man was Created to Live on Earth

The first story of creation in Bible starts from Gen 1:1 and ends in Gen 2:4. It provides us with a mythological or speculative account of the six days describing creation of the universe, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the vegetation and the living beings etc. Most of the narrative is based on erroneous human concepts which have been refuted vehemently by the modern scientists. Moses' authorship of the Genesis has also been denied by the scholars. Instead of accepting it as a writing of one author at any particular period of time, they take Genesis as a composite account of events contributed by various people at different times. The entire account is fret with mutually inconsistent statements and self-contradictory assertions devoid of facts or reason. We have, therefore, analyzed many such assertions and recorded our observations at different occasions in the book. For the present we focus our attention on the creation of Earth and Man. About the third day of creation, the Genesis records:

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.²⁶²

Provision of all suitable things on earth prior to creation of man, therefore, reaffirms the predestination of God to install Adam on the planet. The Genesis records that:

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our

²⁶² Gen 1:9-12 KJV.

likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **27.** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.²⁶³

It is evident from the above that man was created with no other purpose except to abide on earth and to have dominion over everything there. Man, too, was blessed by the Lord to fulfill his assignments on earth as detailed below:

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. **29.** And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.²⁶⁴

The predestination about man to live on earth has also been further stressed by **referring to "Earth" five times in the four verses i.e. 26-29 quoted above.** Another emphasis on the same may be found in the following:

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.²⁶⁵

All this read with Gen 3:16-19 are enough to affirm the fact that humankind was created not only to live on earth but they were also destined to return to the dust of Earth in the end. God's words that '**dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return**' **refute man's likeness with Him.** As regards the Lord, neither had He originated from the dust nor was there any likelihood of His return to the dust. Keeping in view the contents of Genesis 1:26-29, there could be no possibility of man's permanent stay in the Garden. Adam's stay in the Garden can, therefore, be considered as transitory or preparatory period of training

²⁶³ Gen 1:26-27

²⁶⁴ Gen 1:28-29 KJV.

²⁶⁵ Gen 3:19 KJV.

before posting him on a position of independent responsibility on earth as predetermined by the Almighty.

According to the Qur'an, the LORD had created each and everything in the Universe only to worship and serve Him. All the heavenly bodies including the earth and other creatures had been subjected to compulsion due to which, they enjoyed no freewill or liberty to transgress or ignore any commandment of the LORD. Everything in the Universe was, therefore, serving the LORD with utmost precision and without any lapse on their part. The said period of compulsion as well as perfection extended over long periods of time even prior the Big Bang which, according to scientists, occurred about 13.7 years ago. Billions and billions of years might have passed, thereafter, when the Almighty decided to create two new species to be tested and tried on earth. The first of such creatures were Jinn created from the flame of fire perhaps during the period the earth was hot like sun. The LORD created them with freedom of will to choose between the good and evil keeping in view the guidance of the LORD sent through His prophets. (Al-Qur'an 6:130) The Jinn differed from the angels and other creatures of the LORD in respect of their arrogance and pride in addition to certain lusts, appetites, desires and inclinations which could allure them to disregard or to violate the commandments of the LORD. They, however, enjoyed full liberty to choose between various options before them and to act in accordance with their own choice. It seems that most of the Jinn failed in the test. The LORD, therefore, chose humankind for the test.

The Qur'ān repeatedly asserts that Adam was created with the predestination to serve as vicegerent of the LORD on earth. One of the assertions is quoted below:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent

on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."²⁶⁶

It is evident from the above that primary purpose of the LORD to create Adam was to test and try him in the capacity of His deputy on Earth. He insisted to create them having perfect foreknowledge about the acts and deeds of men. Had mere worship or service been the purpose of the creation of the human beings, trillions of angels had already been doing the same flawlessly from periods unknown to us. The Lord, therefore, silenced the angels just with his verdict that "*I have the utmost knowledge about that which you do not know*". This means that the Lord had created Jinn and humankind knowing full well about their future performance on Earth. had sinlessness been the purpose of creation, angels could be better than human beings. The LORD, therefore, created Adam with such complications of nature that in spite of having certain similarities with Jinn as well as the Angels, he was far different from both. The LORD had created angels from light. They did not enjoy the liberty or power to make any transgression against the commandments of the LORD. They were, therefore, immune from sinfulness. As compared to the angels, the Jinn had been created from the flame of fire due to which arrogance and pride were the dominant features of their nature. Humankind shared certain lusts, desires and inclinations with the Jinn. They, however, were created from clay of the earth due to which they were more inclined towards humility than haughtiness. Their creation with flesh, blood and spirit, therefore, distinguished them both from Jinn and the Angels.

The LORD had made all necessary provisions for man prior to his creation and his installation as His vicegerent on Earth. He also gave him the authority to subdue everything on earth in the name of the LORD. The LORD also commanded the angels to acknowledge nobility of the

²⁶⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:30 (Yusuf Ali).

vicegerent designate of the LORD by bowing before Him as a token of respect. It has, therefore, been revealed that:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن صَلْصَالٍ مِّن حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَتْمَعُونَ.

Behold! thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape; "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him." So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together:²⁶⁷

In addition to making the Angels prostrate before the vicegerent of the LORD, the Almighty had bestowed His bounteous blessings on the Earth even earlier to man's placement there. To add to it, the Almighty also subjected everything in the skies to the service of His deputy on earth. Two out of numerous revelations of the Lord pertaining to subjection of other creatures to the cause of man may suffice to elucidate the point:

Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth, and has made his bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah, without knowledge and without guidance, and without a Book to enlighten them!²⁶⁸

We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.²⁶⁹

God's revelations, therefore, knock bottom out of the Christian Doctrine of the fall or condemnation of mankind based on the so-called doctrine of Original Sin.

According to the Bible, the Lord had created man from the Earth and he was destined to live and die there after

²⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an 15:28-30 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an 31:20 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an 17:70 (Yusuf Ali).

fulfillment of the duties assigned to him.²⁷⁰ The Qur'an also reveals about the pre-destination of the Lord for man to serve as His vice-gerent on Earth.²⁷¹ Man, therefore, could not have fulfilled the purpose of his creation merely by living in the Garden. As such, **his stay in the Garden could be probationary or transitory one.** After completion of his initial training he had to leave the garden to take up his actual assignment on Earth as predetermined by the Lord. As such, Adam's lapse or uprightness during his probation could not have changed the predestination of the LORD.

During his posting on the predestined assignment, Adam was obliged to obey all the commandments of the Lord himself and to implement the same on earth. He seems to have discharged his liabilities up to the satisfaction of the Lord because we find no adverse report against him either in the Old Testament or in the Qur'an. In view of this we find no justification for the grudge and contempt of the Christians against the primeval ancestors of mankind.

In response to the repentance of Adam and Eve, the Lord had not only forgiven their fault but also guided them. As an additional blessing on Adam, the Lord chose him as His first prophet on Earth. The Lord then directed them to go down to Earth and to obey the guidance when and if received from the Lord (Al-Qur'an 20:121-123). Adam and Eve, therefore, started with a zero meter on Earth. There could neither be a question of their captivity to sin nor its inheritance by their descendants.

After their posting on Earth, both Adam and Eve ended their lives abiding by the commandments of the Lord. The Bible as well as the Qur'an has no account of their default thereafter. Even if they had indulged into any transgression subsequently, they alone could be held responsible for the same. No taint of sin would be transferred to their progeny. Each individual is bound to account for the actual and personal sins committed by him (Al-Qur'an 35:18).

²⁷⁰ Gen 1:26-29, Gen 3:19, 3:22.

²⁷¹ Al-Qur'an 2:30

God Blessed Man and Other Things Only On Earth

Chapter 3 of Genesis contains the story of the delusion by the Serpent, the disobedience of man and the fall. Queer enough that instead of inflicting death on Adam as wages of his disobedience as announced by the LORD, He was satisfied only to curse the ground for His sake.²⁷² **Since then, it had been the popular tradition of the Bible to absolve the culprit by punishing the innocent one.** The theme had such attraction for the composers of the Bible that they continued adopting the beaten track up to the finalization of the New Testament.

According to Genesis, Noah was a farmer and the first one to plant a vineyard. He became drunk, took off his clothes and lay naked in the tent. Ham, the father of Canaan saw him naked and covered him with the help of his brothers Shem and Japheth. When Noah was sober again, he said: a curse on Canaan, he will be slave to his brothers.²⁷³ The miscarriage of justice is, therefore, apparent from the above. Actually Ham the son of Noah had blundered into the tent spontaneously without any foreknowledge that Noah (pbAh) was lying buck-naked there. Naturally, Ham had neither planned nor intended to see the said nakedness. Under the circumstances, it was humanly impossible for Ham to avoid any abrupt glance at Noah (pbAh). Ham, as such, must be held innocent in the matter. As regards Canaan, son of Ham, he was neither present there nor any role has been ascribed to him in the episode. As such, we observe **misplacement of the curse of Noah on Canaan the innocent one.** This is why the exact nature of Ham's transgression to prove his guilt or the reason of Noah's cursing Canaan the innocent one on behalf of Ham is debated over thousands of years. For further details please refer to Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of our book '*Israelites vs. Other Nations*'.

²⁷² Gen. 2:17, Gen 3:17.

²⁷³ Gen. 9:20-25.

Canaan had, therefore, been cursed for the sin of Noah and Ham.²⁷⁴ Pharaoh and Abimelech had to suffer inflictions for the inequities attributed to Abraham.²⁷⁵ Esau was cursed for the crimes committed by Jacob.²⁷⁶ Later on, taking due advantage of the substitution of the culprit, St. Paul preached universal application of the same. According to him, Jesus Christ, the first born and innocent son of God was cursed and hanged on the tree to expiate the sins committed by others. He said:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.²⁷⁷

Instances referred to above show that God had no regard for His own law and principles of justice and equity enjoined on humankind. When the Lord himself sets the tradition of acquitting the wrong doer and punishes the innocent in the stead of the culprits, what will be the pattern of justice and equity for the human beings on Earth? Such instances can better be termed as miscarriage or mockery of justice.

Prophets of the Lord had always been teaching their followers to worship and believe in one and the only Lord God of the Universe and seek His mercy and forgiveness through repentance of their sins before Him. Blood sacrifice had never been a must for expiation of sin. Hosea had conveyed the message of the Lord that:

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.²⁷⁸

As against this, we find St. Paul as the first Christian father to propagate that:

22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (...) **26.** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared

²⁷⁴ Gen 9:20-27.

²⁷⁵ Gen 12:17-19 & Gen 20:1-5

²⁷⁶ Gen 27:19-40. See also *Israelites Vs. Other Nations*, Ch. 13, s.v. 'c) Esau and Jacob (pbAh).

²⁷⁷ Gal 3:13 KJV. See also Gal 3:10.

²⁷⁸ Hos 6:6 KJV.

to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.²⁷⁹

Avoiding to refute the single sided arguments of St. Paul, we need to remind our readers that God had always been enjoying absolute sovereignty over His creatures. God was competent enough to forgive the sins or to punish anyone as per His own sweet will. He was under no obligation to demand blood sacrifice for remission of sin. Nobody had any right to question the judgment of the LORD or to raise any objection against Him. In the afore-stated circumstances, one fails to understand why it was necessary for St. Paul to suggest expiation of sin of humankind through despicable death of Christ (the first born and the only begotten son of God the father) on the Roman Cross. Why to denounce Jesus and the Law of the Lord as curse instead of blessings?²⁸⁰ Factually, he repudiated Jesus Christ who had emphatically declared that:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. **Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:** but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.²⁸¹

We, therefore, observe that by arrogant denunciation of the Law of the Lord as a curse, St. Paul committed blasphemy both against the Lord and Jesus Christ for which he must be called '*the least in the kingdom of heaven*' as per the verdict of Jesus Christ quoted above.

Adam Started with a Zero Meter on Earth

The Almighty had created Jinn much earlier than Man. Iblees was a Jinn who used to accompany the angels to

²⁷⁹ Heb 9:22, 26 KJV.

²⁸⁰ Gal. 3:10.

²⁸¹ Mat 5:17-19 KJV.

worship the LORD. Both Jinn and Man had been created for their test and trial on Earth. They, therefore, enjoyed freedom from compulsion in their nature. Both species had the liberty to abide by the commandments of the Lord or to violate the same as per their own choice. During their trial, however, Jinn proved to be more arrogant as compared to humankind. Satan had been the first creature of the Lord to willfully disobey the commandment of the LORD. As against him, Adam indulged into the transgression only due to seduction of Satan. Being called to show cause for their disobedience, Iblees behaved arrogantly. Besides entering into arguments with the LORD (Al-Qur'an 15:33), he not only blamed the Almighty but also challenged to continue misguiding Adam and his progeny (Al-Qur'an 7:16). Adam on the other hand, plainly confessed his guilt and sought forgiveness of the LORD with a firm resolve to abide by His commandments in future. This humility before the Lord, therefore, earned Adam the exalted position of the first prophet as well as the vice-gerent of the Lord on earth. Consequently, he turned up to his resolution perfectly. During his stay on earth extending from 930 to 1000 years earth, Adam did not commit any transgression against the commandments of the LORD. Many among his descendants were chosen to the exalted position of prophethood in the world. It is, therefore, an erroneous and ill founded concept that humankind bore a taint of Sin on them. God gives each one his own chance to start with a zero meter on earth and to account for his own deeds. Almighty Allah has emphatically declared the same:

On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:)...."²⁸²

...Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another...."²⁸³

We feel that the Christian theologians have unnecessarily attributed the origin of the sins and death of humankind to Adam and Eve. God or the prophets did not blame Adam or

²⁸² Al-Qur'an 2:286

²⁸³ Al-Qur'an 6:164.

Eve for inflicting sinfulness or death on their descendants. Only the Christians magnify the vicious role of Adam extravagantly to prove him an antitype of Christ whom they present as the sanctified and the only savior of humankind. God also did not reveal that Jesus Christ or anyone else would be able to take on them the sins of others. Jesus too did not claim divinity for himself nor the power to remit the sins of humankind.

God has always been providing humankind with the guidance to do good deeds. In case they falter from the straight path, they can always repent and seek mercy of the Lord. Only the obstinate persistence on the sinful deeds can destroy the sinners. Salvation, therefore, lies in repentance and resolve to do good in future. One is sure to be saved by repentance and imploring the mercy of Lord. The Lord had commanded that:

114. And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: For those things, that are good remove those that are evil: Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember (their Lord):²⁸⁴

God also revealed to Moses that:

10. "Now do thou throw thy rod!" But when he saw it moving (of its own accord) as if it had been a snake, he turned back in retreat, and retraced not his steps: "O Moses!" (it was said), "Fear not: truly, in My presence, those called as messengers have no fear, **11.** "But if any have done wrong and have thereafter substituted good to take the place of evil, truly, I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."²⁸⁵

Term 'Sin' Does not Occur in the Story of Fall

So far as the narrative of the Garden of Eden and fall is concerned, there is nothing to indicate the sinfulness, depravity or condemnation of Adam or his progeny. God always continued to bless mankind on earth. He neither

²⁸⁴ Al-Qur'an 11:114 Yusuf Ali.

²⁸⁵ Al-Qur'an, 27:10-11.

revoked His blessings on them nor cursed them. Even after drowning the sinful people in the deluge, the Lord did not forget to repeat His blessings for Noah and his sons.²⁸⁶ The LORD also assured His blessings to Abraham and to those who bless him.²⁸⁷ It is, therefore, **incorrect to denounce all human beings as children of wrath**. No true prophet of the LORD endorsed the said opinion of the Christians. Prophets also did not believe in the eternal damnation or incorrigible corruption in man debilitating him to do anything good. As against this, the prophets like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ continued to preach the people to repent and to turn away from their sinfulness to seek salvation from the Lord who was extremely Gracious and Merciful towards them.

In spite of severe transgressions and lack of faithfulness on the part of human beings, the Lord did not desert them without guidance. He had been maintaining His covenant relationship with different communities of humankind from time to time. Prominent among such covenants were those formalized with the people of Adam, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Abraham, Shoaib, Moses, and Muhammad ﷺ. The said continuation of the covenant relationship between God and man, therefore, destroys the presumption of God's estrangement from man. Although the Israelites had very often been forsaking the Lord by turning away from Him, yet the Lord had been expressing His willingness to take them back. His relation with them was that of love.²⁸⁸ He said:

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.²⁸⁹

Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ Gen 9:1,
²⁸⁷ Gen 12:2-3²⁸⁸ Hos 2:19-20, 10:12.²⁸⁹ Hos 11:1 KJV.²⁹⁰ Jer 31:20 KJV.

Jesus always referred to the Lord as '**your father and my father**' which denotes love and compassion of the LORD. Prophet Hosea carried a call for Israel to turn away from idol worship and to turn to the Lord repentantly. According to him, God said:

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.²⁹¹

Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.²⁹²

God Needed No Rest

From the narrative in the first chapter of the Genesis, it transpires that the Lord continued to create different things during each of the six days of creation and every day, He expressed His pleasure saying '*it was good*'.²⁹³ The creation was finished by the end of the sixth day when the Lord reiterated His pleasure for the seventh time affirming that '*it was very good*':

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.²⁹⁴

Eventually entire creation had been finished before the seventh day as quoted below:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.²⁹⁵

From the above, we note that after working for six days consecutively, the Lord had gone to rest on the 7th day. The

²⁹¹ Hos 11:9 KJV.

²⁹² Hos 12:6 KJV.

²⁹³ Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25.

²⁹⁴ Gen 1:31 KJV.

²⁹⁵ Gen 2:1-3 KJV.

second narrative, however, does not allow any rest to the LORD. He had to create the garden to administer other affairs relating to the serpent, Adam and Eve. The Qur'ān has emphatically denied the idea of any weariness of God.

See they not that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never wearied with their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yea, verily He has power over all things.²⁹⁶

Another verse of the Qur'ān contains beautiful and authentic introduction of the LORD and His attributes:

Allah! There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).²⁹⁷

Elevation or Fall

The episode in the Garden came to an end with the following:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.²⁹⁸

This shows that the expulsion was not caused due to sin or degeneration of Adam. It also cannot be termed as punishment for the transgression. According to the narrative quoted above, the audacity of Adam and Eve had in fact elevated them to the likeness with gods. **Genesis 3:22, therefore, conflicts with Genesis 1:26 which**

²⁹⁶ Al-Qur'ān 46:33 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁹⁷ Al-Qur'ān 2:255 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁹⁸ Gen 3:22-24 KJV.

asserted that God had already created Adam in His own likeness. In case Adam already had a resemblance with God, then Genesis 3:22 as quoted above has to be treated as incorrect. According to this narrative, gods stood scared of the elevation of man. They, therefore, had to expel Adam due to the apprehension that he may not eat from the tree of life also to live forever. As such, instead of degeneration, it was elevation of Adam which compelled the gods to send him back to the place predestined for him. We can, therefore, call it a return home from the academy to serve the LORD as His deputy on earth.

Adam had many exalted prophets among his descendants. Instead of a fall, therefore, it was Adam's posting on a position of nobility which was envied both by the Angels and the Jinn. Hence, the Christians mourning over '*The Paradise Lost*' is without a cause. They unnecessarily malign Adam and Eve as despicable villains against humankind inflicting sinfulness and death on them. All such misconceptions are based on misinterpretations of certain verses in the Genesis and speculations of Christian fathers to serve as a foundation for the necessity of Christ as a redeemer for the fallen man.

Conclusions Drawn from the Episode

The Lord had created Adam to be tested and tried as His vice-gerent on Earth. It was an independent assignment of great responsibility. The Lord, therefore, created Adam with the complexities of nature necessary for his trial on Earth. The all-knowing, all-wise God, decided to impart some initial training to Adam and Eve in the Garden before posting them on the assignment predetermined for them. On the one hand, the Lord created Adam from the essence of clay to conform closely to his environments on Earth yet on the other He also infused His spirit in him to exalt him to a higher level to hold the position of great distinction on Earth. Adam was, therefore, created with a strange mix of superior nature, knowledge, intuition, potentials and capabilities, as against short comings, infirmities, appetites,

forgetfulness, lusts and insecurities like those of the ordinary animals. Human faculties of speech, writing, learning, exploration and multifarious use of hand had no match in the world. God also bestowed humankind with the knowledge of good and bad, discretion to choose between the two and freedom to act independently.

To abide on earth was, therefore, unavoidable for Adam. Since, due to his envy against him, Satan had openly declared that he would be misleading humankind, before putting Adam on the position of independence with authority, it was found necessary to impart an essential training to him. This probation in the Garden was a transitory period of human preparation for the distinguished position on Earth. Adam and Eve learnt there not only about the guise and guile of Satan but also fatal consequences of the same. From their experience in the Garden, therefore, they learnt to seek protection of the Lord from the vicissitudes of Satan and also to turn to Him repentantly for seeking forgiveness in case of any transgression committed by them. The training, therefore, did not go waste. Although Adam and Eve lived on Earth for about 930-1000 years thereafter, yet neither the Bible nor the Qur'an report any lapse on their part.

As against the misinterpretation of the genesis 1:26-27 by the Christians, man had been created in his own likeness than in the likeness of God, Angels or any other species created by the Almighty. God reveals that:

7. Him Who created thee. Fashioned thee in due proportion, and gave thee a just bias; **8** In whatever Form He wills, does He put thee together.²⁹⁹

Angels enjoyed immunity from sin while Adam was always vulnerable to various temptations compelling him to transgress the limits suggested by the LORD. Immediate needs, lusts and desires could always induce mankind to commit sin. Only the God-fearing and faithful bondsmen of Allah enjoyed His protection to be saved from sinfulness.

²⁹⁹ Al-Qur'ān 82:7-8 (Yusuf Ali).

Adam and Eve were neither the inventors nor planners of willful disobedience. They had been misled by Satan to eat from the forbidden tree. On realization of their fault, they confessed it plainly and implored the Lord earnestly to forgive their transgression. They neither repeated the mistake nor did they indulge into futile arguments with the Lord. Instead of blaming the Lord, both Adam and Eve confessed their guilt and repented immediately. Their humility and appeal for mercy and forgiveness was accepted by the Lord graciously. Adam's lapse in the academy during his training period was, therefore, forgiven to him there and then. He passed out of the academy with great honors. Instead of condemning Adam and Eve for sin, the Lord blessed mankind abundantly and elevated them over all His creatures on Earth.

Humankind did not inherit degeneration or death from their first parents. Everyone is born with purity of nature and enjoys freedom to choose between the good and evil. God also had no estrangement from humankind due to so called Original Sin of Adam and Eve. Had it not been so, the Lord would not have sent about 124,000 prophets to guide and warn the humankind against fatal consequences of disobedience to the commandments of the Lord.

The Enigma for the Christians

There can be no denial of the fact that humankind were created from the Earth to occupy it and to return to earth on their death.³⁰⁰ As such, there was no possibility of any permanent stay of Adam in the garden. Jesus neither talked about the Garden nor about the Original Sin of Adam and Eve leading mankind to condemnation and fall. As such, the doctrine of Original Sin as a foundation for redemption through Christ is an innovation of the Christian fathers. Instead of any revelation from the Lord, the Christian theory of salvation is based on self-assumed postulates of the Christian fathers. Such theories also cannot coexist with

³⁰⁰ Al-Qur'an 20:55, Gen 3:19.

God's continued guidance to humankind through His prophets.

To sort out the problem and confusion created by the Christian fathers, we find no source better than the Qur'an which provides immutable message of the Lord with satisfactory solutions to all ambiguities and contradictions faced by the Christians. Qur'an is the only book in the world which is free from all misconceptions, mistakes, contradictions or insertions in its text. It has always maintained its pristine purity in language, words phrases or spellings during last about 1450 years. No other book in the world can challenge the position of Qur'an as regards absolute correctness of the revelations preserved therein.

INCRIMINATION OF ADAM AND EVE

Original Perfection of Nature

Relying on literal interpretation of Genesis³⁰¹, the Christian theologians took it for granted that Adam was created in the likeness of God due to which he must have been enjoying perfection in the original nature of his creation. Adam, as such, was supposed to be immune from sin and death. The doctrine of Original Sin according to the Christians has been derived from interpretation of the narrative of Adam's stay in the Garden and the fall. The Christians, therefore, profess that:

Adam and Eve, as they came from the hand of God, were God's supernatural image and likeness through sanctifying grace (...) God's life left their souls and they became spiritually dead as a body from which the spirit has departed (...) No longer were they God's dear children; instead they became "the children of the devil"³⁰². Heaven was closed against them and hell was ready to receive them. What a dreadful, heartbreaking tragedy! *On Account of their sin Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace and the right to heaven.*³⁰³

After critical appraisal of the text of the Genesis and also taking into account the arguments of the Christian fathers, the scholars today find nothing substantial to support the concept of man's likeness with God or the doctrine of Original Sin leading to death and degeneration of the nature of man. With the only exception of Gen (1:26-

³⁰¹ Gen 1:26-27.

³⁰² 1 John 3:10. Joseph Baierl, the author of *Creed Explained*, however, fails to tell us the duration during which Adam and Eve had remained "God's dear children". On what authority could he declare a sinner as son of devil than the son of God? By denying repentance and God's mercy for human beings, Mr. Baierl takes us far away from the Lord.

³⁰³ *The Creed Explained*, p. 202.

27)³⁰⁴, the Bible as well as the Qur'ān strongly rebut the creation of anything in the universe in the likeness of God. It is, therefore, erroneous to presume that Adam had any resemblance with God at the time of his creation. It is also incorrect to think that some creature of the Lord has any capability to bring a change in the nature of his creation. In view of this, we fail to agree with the Christian indictment that through sin, Adam had inflicted death or distortion of nature on himself and his progeny. Nothing in the Bible or the Qur'ān supports this view. Instead of any degeneration or distortion in the nature of creation being caused by the sin of Adam, the Lord affirms having created humankind in the best of the moulds. God said:

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds.³⁰⁵

While addressing the Holy Prophet, the LORD said:

So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. **There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation.** That is the right religion, but most men know not.³⁰⁶

This, therefore, affirms that **the Almighty created man with upright nature which was unchangeable forever.**

Christian theologians are unaware of the fact that being subjected to compulsion of nature, all the heavenly bodies and the angels were bound to discharge their duties perfectly. This was so because they did not enjoy liberty to fall short of perfection. As against them, the LORD had created the human beings with the additional purpose of testing and trying them on earth. He, therefore, bestowed them with such complexities of nature which were necessary for the said purpose. Instead of compulsion, they

³⁰⁴ We are fully aware of the fact that the original words of the Almighty revealed to Moses had been lost irretrievably. Whatever we possess today are certain reports from anonymous persons translated by unknown people into the languages not known to Moses or his followers. In the absence of the original Hebrew words reported faithfully by the followers of Moses, therefore, we cannot accord any authenticity to the text in our hands.

³⁰⁵ Al-Qur'ān 95:4 (Yusuf Ali).

³⁰⁶ Al-Qur'an 30:30 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

were granted free will and independence so that they may choose between various options before them and act in accordance with their own choice. Guidance also was provided through prophets of the LORD sent to them. God reveals that:

Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide,³⁰⁷

Taught man that which he knew not.³⁰⁸

And shown him the two highways?³⁰⁹

And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and
(what is) right for it.³¹⁰

It is man's own choice than corruption of nature that may lead him to righteousness or to sin. The lapse of Adam and Eve during their probation in the Garden has, therefore, been unduly exploited as determining factor for the fate of man. The Christians closed their eyes to virtuous and flawless conduct of Adam and Eve extending about 930 or 1000 years on earth. The hyperbolic cognizance of the so-called Original Sin which was momentary lapse of Adam and Eve in the garden had been magnified to such an extent that it overruled or nullified one thousand years of the virtuous deeds of Adam and Eve on earth. To vindicate the truth in the self-conceived doctrine of Original Sin, the Christians had been using dark shaded glasses which did not allow them to see any virtuous deed in the prophets, the saints and other pious devotees of the LORD. They profess that Christ and his mother Mary were the only sinless individuals among humankind. The Christians also make no differentiation between the cardinal sins committed deliberately by human beings or the venial sins committed by them through some oversight. No provision had been made for repentance or efforts to rectify the lapses in future. Good deeds enjoyed no weight while a trivial sin was enough to bracket an individual with the sinners condemned to death and perdition forever.

³⁰⁷ Al-Qur'ān 92:12 (Yusuf Ali).

³⁰⁸ Al-Qur'ān 96:5 (Yusuf Ali).

³⁰⁹ Al-Qur'ān 90:10 (Yusuf Ali).

³¹⁰ Al-Qur'an 91:8 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

Inheritance of corrupt nature, eternal condemnation and death are the postulates necessitating Jesus Christ as the only savior of humankind. The concept of righteousness in the ancestors and inheritance of anything good from them had to be rejected simply because it was repugnant to the theory of salvation based entirely on vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ to expiate sin.

As against the Christian faith, the Islamic traditions make sharp distinction in the gravity of various sins, their number, repetition, motivation and intentions behind them. **Belief in multiplicity of deities, ascribing partners to the Almighty and worshiping Gods other than the Lord is the cardinal sin in Islam that shall not be forgiven unless one repents, renounces the wrong faith and reforms himself to worship the Almighty alone.** Man's persistence on sins, without repentance adds to the wrath of God whereas repentance and reformation obliterates their sins. Instead of wrath, the repentant sinners attract love and compassion of the Lord.³¹¹

In his account of the fall, Clement³¹² says:

"the first man, when in Paradise, sported free, because he was the child of God; but when he succumbed to pleasure (for the serpent allegorically signifies pleasure crawling on its belly, earthly wickedness nourished for fuel to the flames), was as a child seduced by lusts, and grew old in disobedience; and by disobeying his Father, dishonoured God. Such was the influence of pleasure."³¹³

While placing man into the Garden of Eden, God had clothed the souls of Adam and Eve in glorious white garments. They were in God's supernatural image enjoying likeness with Him. A Christian scholar, therefore, asserts that:

Adam was very good, possessing boundless possibilities of

³¹¹ Al-Qur'an 2:222.

³¹² (Born 150, Athens, died between 211 and 215), Christian apologist, missionary theologian to the Hellenistic world, and leader of the catechetical school at Alexandria.

³¹³ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1903) p. 293

development and advancements, onwards and upwards towards the uttermost perfection of his being and the attainment of glorious destiny. And he was immortal in the sense of being exempt from all that makes death terrible, from all that makes death what to our minds it is.³¹⁴

As soon as they ate from the forbidden tree, they were stripped of the shining white garments, God's life left their souls and they became spiritually dead. Sin darkened the minds of our first parents, and they lost the sanctifying grace and the right of heaven. Adam and Eve became subject to strong inclination to evil; they were driven out of the Garden of Paradise, and became subject to death and the suffering on earth. Sin and death came into the world through the aforesaid disobedience of Adam and Eve. The later being created from the rib of Adam, was a part of Adam. Since all human beings were the progeny of Adam and Eve, therefore, they were born with the taint of Original Sin on them. It is said:

No longer are we perfectly healthy and sound as we were when we came forth from the hands of our creator the sickness of original sin has weakened us all severely in soul and body. It is true, we still know what is right and what is wrong, but we do find it difficult always to do the right thing. Wicked inclinations arise within us, even against our will. Some of us feel strongly inclined to be proud and vain. Others feel a strong thirst for honor, wealth and pleasure, especially sinful pleasure. Others, again, are prone to fly into a rage at the least provocation. Every child of man, since Adam's sin, has his pet inclination, his special passion.³¹⁵

Although some of the Hebrew writings contemporaneous with the writings of St. Paul had asserted that death had been decreed against the race because of Adam's sin yet there were others who believed that each individual was responsible for his own ruin. Pseudo-Baruch expressed it that every man was the Adam of his own soul. St. Paul might have picked up the idea from the Hebrews which was

³¹⁴ H. V. S. ECK, M.A., *Sin*, pg. 9-10.

³¹⁵ JOSEPH J. BAIERL, *The Creed Explained* 5th Ed. (Rochester; Art Print Shop, 77 St. Paul St. 1943) pg. 173

utilized as a foundation stone for the necessity of a redeemer in the shape of Jesus Christ.

To emphasize and magnify the fault of Adam, the Christian theologians state that the disobedience of Adam included in itself the elements of all sins which had arrested and thwarted man's development from the very first. It started the retrograde force of human advancement towards perfection. The original flaw of Adam infected the human nature which hindered man to fulfill the original purpose of God³¹⁶. His transgression brought universal sinfulness and its universal penalty of death. Adam, therefore, was the culprit to introduce sin and death which has been inherited by all his descendants.

Ben Sira was the precursor of the Talmudic Teachings pertaining to the Fall. Even earlier than St. Paul, Ben Sira held that Sin entered into the world as an actuality in Eve's transgression and recognized that all men were sinners.

Following St. Paul and the early fathers, most of the Christians hold Adam and Eve culpable for the sin and death for humankind. They have abundantly accused both Adam and Eve for the misconduct causing hereditary sinfulness in their descendants. They were, therefore, responsible for the perversity and depravity of the entire race.

Incrimination of Adam

Among all the descendants of Adam, the Christians are conspicuous for describing Adam and Eve as the most detested villains of mankind. They allege that: 'Adam sinned because as a coward he gave in to the wicked suggestion of his wife saying *'the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat it.'*³¹⁷ See how he tries to excuse his wickedness. Secondly, he sinned also by unbelief or mistrust in God's word. He

³¹⁶ It is wrong to presume that anything in the universe can hinder the purpose of God.

³¹⁷ Gen 3:12 KJV.

sinned also by pride or disobedience for he, too, tried to become like God.

The Christian scholars have made great efforts to highlight, elaborate and magnify the wickedness of Adam and Eve and their unscrupulous conduct. They paint them as the villains who drove humankind into everlasting despair. A summary of the salient accusations against Adam and Eve is given below:

- 1.** By their disobedience our first parents plunged the whole human race into ignorance.
- 2.** By the disobedience of our first parents, our will has been weakened; there is in all of us a strong inclination to sin.....But that is not all. God cursed the earth and passed the sentence of condemnation on all men.³¹⁸
- 3.** There is no medicine that can save us perpetually from death. St. Paul reminds us that Sin entered into the world and through sin Death (...) *By the disobedience of Adam, the whole human race was plunged into suffering and death.*³¹⁹
- 4.** Death, suffering, ignorance and strong inclination to sin are the chief punishments that have come upon us on account of the disobedience of Adam.³²⁰
- 5.** The judgment of Jehovah entered against Adam took away his right to life. When expelled from Eden he still possessed soundness of mind and organism; but being condemned to die the decree must be carried out, and the death process began.³²¹
- 6.** The villainous conduct of Adam caused loss of the original perfection in the nature of humankind:

Look at Adam as he came from the hand of God, a creature made only a little less glorious than the angels. God clothed his soul with the white shining garment of His grace, the royal robe of a child of the King of kings. He breathed life into Adam's soul, His own Divine life, sanctifying grace, which

³¹⁸ *The Creed Explained*, p. 212.

³¹⁹ *The Creed Explained* pg. 213.

³²⁰ *The Creed Explained* p 213.

³²¹ J. F. Rutherford, *Creation*, 2,445,000 Edition, (New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1927) p. 68.

made Adam like God Himself, resplendent in beauty and holiness, a child of God and an heir to God's unending bliss. And God willed that all of Adam's children should come into the world clothed with that royal robe and alive with God's own life.³²²

Then Adam rebelled against God and at once, he was deprived of that royal robe; God's life left his soul. Gone was the glorious sunshine and in its place came terrifying darkness. God's wonderful, supernatural image lay in ruins. The garment of grace was stripped from Adam's soul, and in its place Satan put chains of slavery to drag his victim down to the perdition. What an awful tragedy! And Adam left that misery to all his children. On account of the sin of Adam, we his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace. We inherit his sin as we would have inherited god's gift to him, sanctifying grace, had he been obedient to God.³²³

It is further alleged that:

The sinful state or condition which followed from the sin continued; Adam had lost sanctifying grace, he was no longer just and holy, nor God's child and an heir to heaven, as he ought to have been according to God's plan. His soul was ugly and foul in God's eyes and spiritually dead. That was the sinful state or condition of Adam's soul after his sinful act. It is this sinful state of soul that has passed into every child of Adam. On account of the sin of Adam, we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace which we ought to have according to God's original plan to be holy and just in His sight.³²⁴

Children of Wrath

The concept of degeneration and death inflicted through sin of Adam in the Garden had polluted the minds of the Christian scholars to the extent they spared no efforts to magnify the crimes of the primogenitors of humankind to prove them as the villains against their own progeny. Although we find nothing substantial in their arguments, yet it may be useful to record here the view point of Mr. Rutherford the Judge in the following:

³²² *The Creed Explained*, pg. 214. The belief that something can happen against the will of God is a blasphemy against the Almighty.

³²³ *The Creed Explained*, p. 214.

³²⁴ *The Creed Explained*, p. 215.

What kind of children should be expected to be born of imperfect parents under the sentence of death? It must be borne in mind that Adam had no right to life, and therefore he could not transmit to his offspring the right to life. In addition to the absence of a right to life, Adam was undergoing the process of death, and it follows that his offspring under such circumstances could not be perfect.

Both Adam and Eve now were sinners, Therefore, their children must of necessity be born in sin. Later one of the prophets of God recorded Jehovah's rule governing all cases: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51:5)³²⁵ Upon this same point another of God's inspired witness wrote: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) These scriptures, stating that rule of Jehovah, explain why all children have been born imperfect and without the right to life, and why in due course of time they become sick and die.³²⁶

All such concepts are essentially incorrect because in response to a prayer of Moses, the Almighty had said:

قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الرَّكَاتَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

.... He said: "With My punishment I visit whom I will; **but My mercy extendeth to all things**. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our signs;³²⁷

Humankind, therefore, have no justification to condemn themselves as children of wrath. They are definitely children of mercy as long as they do not falter away from the Creator, sustainer and evolver of the Universe who introduced himself to them as Allah, the most Gracious and most Merciful. Incidentally, we also rebut the concept of the Christian fathers that God had suffered on account of our

³²⁵ Instead of a revelation, this assertion shows humility of man confessing guilt and seeking forgiveness. It does not allege sinfulness to the prophets or other pious servants of the LORD.

³²⁶ J. F. Rutherford, *Creation*, p. 63-64.

³²⁷ Al-Qur'an 7:156 (Yusuf Ali).

sins. Let them know that nothing can cause any harm to the Almighty. All wrongs we do destroy none but our own souls. That's why the Almighty had revealed to Adam and Eve to pray in the following words:

They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost."³²⁸

J. F. Rutherford Maligns Adam and Eve

In his eagerness to contrast Adam with Jesus Christ, J. F. Rutherford maligned Adam and Eve by using the most bitter, disgraceful and scornful words against the primogenitors of all human beings on Earth. Look at the manner he abuses the first parents of all the prophets of the Lord. He said:

Adam and his wife were expelled from their paradise home. They went out in disgrace and under the sentence of death. (...) it was a dark day for them when they left Eden, and it continued dark. Their long journey of sorrow had begun. At the end of nine hundred and thirty years in darkness and sin Adam went down into the pit, and the earth closed over him.³²⁹

Joseph Baierl endorses the same by recording that:

He (Adam) freely chose to disobey. How foolish, then, to accuse God of being unjust and cruel! God is not unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam, because original sin takes away only the free gift which God in His goodness would have bestowed on us if Adam had not sinned.³³⁰

J. F. Rutherford further said:

God can not approve an imperfect thing. The word condemn or condemnation means to judge adversely. God must judge all men adversely, because all are descendants of Adam and therefore all are imperfect.³³¹ Such disability was not because of any direct act on the part of the individuals.

³²⁸ Al-Qur'an 7:23

³²⁹ J. F. Rutherford, *Creation*, p. 62.

³³⁰ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 218.

³³¹ Judge Rutherford has wrongly ascribed condemnation to Adam and his progeny. The God had in fact honored descendants of Adam over most of His creatures. (Al-Qur'an 17:70).

Even the faithful men named, Abraham and others of like faith, could not receive the promised blessing. They put forth their best endeavors to obey the Lord, but they “all died in faith, not having received the promises”.³³² (Heb. 11:13, 39) The Apostle Paul states why they could not receive the blessing: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. In this scripture, “us” refers to the new creation (Heb 11:40).³³³

Similarly, Joseph Baierl explains that:

We all share in the misfortune that followed upon the sin of our first parents. But God be praised! We soon became God’s dear children once more. When the priest poured the water of baptism on our heads, the Holy Spirit, with the precious Blood of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, washed the hateful stain of original sin from our souls and adorned them with the wondrous garment of sanctifying grace.³³⁴

It, therefore, goes without saying that revelations of the Lord and preachings of the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ had no credibility for J. F. Rutherford or Joseph Baierl as compared to the preachings of St. Paul based on his own speculations than revelations from the Almighty. The Christians may also probe into the authority of Joseph Baierl to announce that *“We soon became God’s dear children once more. When the priest poured the water of baptism on our heads, the Holy Spirit, with the precious Blood of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, washed the hateful stain of original sin from our souls and adorned them with the wondrous garment of sanctifying grace”*. As against this, we firmly believe that the priest had never been endowed by the Lord with the power to wash of the hateful stain of Original Sin, to infuse spirit of the Lord, or to confer the garment of sanctifying grace on the sinners baptized by them. No doubt we could trace out the concept of Original

³³² St. Paul had no authority to pass any judgment on Abraham the father of faith of all the people of Book. All prophets including Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Eliah, David, Jesus and Muhammad and others were among the followers of the faith of Abraham.

³³³ J. F. Rutherford, *Creation*, p. 146.

³³⁴ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 219.

Sin and its remedy in the disjointed speculations of the Jewish scholars yet it took another five centuries when the Christian fathers succeeded to present it in a formal shape. Some of them, arrived at the conclusion that:

Every child of Adam is born into the world with the stain of sin on his soul (...) Original Sin has stained the garment of his soul. He is utterly unfit for heaven. Indeed, he would be ashamed to appear before the angels and saints of heaven in a filthy condition (...) see how important holy baptism is how necessary it is to have sanctifying grace in your souls.³³⁵

Terrible is the punishment which God inflicted on Adam and Eve. True, they were still God's natural image and likeness, even after the fall. But God's supernatural image was destroyed in their souls. They no longer shared in the life of God.³³⁶ Grace departed from their hearts. God abandoned His tabernacle in their souls. It lay in desolate ruins. They had ceased to be His children, and heirs to an eternal inheritance. Shame and fear made cowards of them; yes, enemies of God. Now Satan was their master, and what a pitiless master he is! The grave opened to receive their mortal remains. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord."³³⁷

All such writings are based merely on human speculations without any affirmation from the Almighty. We, therefore, find no justification for their acceptance as guidance from the Lord.

St. Paul had neither been a prophet of the Lord nor an apostle chosen by Jesus Christ. From where did he get the authority to abrogate the law of the Lord or to preach Trinity instead of strict and unanimous monotheism of the Prophets, we do not know? His followers like Mr. Rutherford and Joseph Baierl, too, had no justification to condemn the most venerated primogenitors of the prophets. We also observe that Genesis contains about 31 verses referring to Adam and Eve. None out of the same has any reference about the sin or condemnation of Adam. Similarly, the 9 verses about them in the New Testament contain nothing

³³⁵ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 219-220.

³³⁶ The concept is essentially incorrect. No creature can ever share in the life of God.

³³⁷ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 207.

from the Almighty or Jesus Christ to accuse Adam or Eve in the manner the Christians are doing today. The Qur'an has, therefore, refuted them by reiterating blessings of the Lord on Adam and his progeny throughout the book.

Adam's Contrast with Jesus

It was the necessity of the Christian theory of salvation that they must draw a sharp contrast between Jesus Christ, by depicting him as the benevolent savior of mankind against Adam the antitype of Christ and an unscrupulous villain against his progeny. To prove extreme goodness and dire need of the savior, it was necessary to paint the most devastated and depraved condition of mankind in which the villainous primogenitors had placed them. The more heinous they depict the crimes of Adam and Eve to affirm the deplorable and helpless plight of humankind the more will be the need to crave for the redeemer to save them. To present Adam and Eve in the darkest colors was, therefore, necessary to contrast him with the benevolent and luminous figures of Jesus Christ.

The Remedy For Sin

The Christians hold that:

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our lord.³³⁸

The aforementioned creed of the Christians flares the fire of hatred, dislike and contempt against our first parents, as they hold them responsible for all our sufferings, miseries and death. No prophet of Israel from Adam to Jesus ever believed in that manner. God never made such a revelation nor such belief is found anywhere in the books of the Old Testament.

Credit for propounding such a dreadful and despicable theory of original and hereditary sin with its magnified and unavoidable impact on posterity of Adam goes to Saint

³³⁸ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 207.

Paul, a self-claimed apostle of Jesus. His followers did not lag behind and they have been utilizing all their knowledge and expertise to augment and intensify the blame on the first parents of human race.

Jesus & His Immaculate Mother

Muslims have a firm belief that all the prophets of the Lord had been saved from sinfulness by the Almighty. The list includes Jesus Christ as the last warner and prophet of the Lord among the Israelites and his mother about whom it has been reported that:

Narrated Abu Musa Al-Ashari: The Prophet said, "The superiority of 'Aysha to other ladies is like the superiority of Tharid (i.e. meat and bread dish) to other meals. Many men reached the level of perfection, but no woman reached such a level except Mary, the daughter of Imran and Asia, the wife of Pharaoh."³³⁹

We, therefore, hold that all the prophets of the Lord had lived under the guidance and protection of the Lord and none of them committed any sin during his life on Earth. Mary the mother of Jesus Christ too had been counted among the sinless. As against this, the Christians hold entire mankind among the sinners with the exception of Jesus and his mother. J. F. Rutherford has observed that:

St. Paul reminds us of that truth in these words: "as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death passed into all men because all have sinned." He means to say: as all men, even infants, must suffer the death of the body on account of the sin of one man, Adam, so too Adam's sin passed into all men; we have all inherited his sin. There are but two glorious exceptions: first, our Saviour who came into the world to take away that sin and all other sins, and His immaculate Mother Mary, as we shall see presently.³⁴⁰

From Adam the stained water of original sin flows into the souls of every race in the wide world. There is only one exception. Original sin halted before the soul of Mary, the mother of the savior..... From the first instant of our

³³⁹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, Book 55, Hadith No. 643.

³⁴⁰ *The Creed Explained*, p. 214-215.

conception, the blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the merits of her divine son and this privilege is called “Her immaculate conception”.³⁴¹

It is also claimed that:

Adam’s sin brought a shadow to the souls of all men except that of Mary, so that no man ever escaped God’s just punishment for this transgression solely by His own powers. After the sin of our first parents, dusk settled over the hearts of men. God’s grace no longer sent its rays of light and hope to the children of men. Without help, all men were destined to perish miserably. There was triumph in hell. Gloating over the misfortune of mankind, Satan said to his wicked spirits: there, now you see God’s masterpiece! Look at him, man, the image of God! Now he is mine, mine forever!³⁴²

What was in the serpent’s mind? The plot to destroy all men and make them slaves. Who was the woman? She was Mary, the mother of God. Through her, the Redeemer came to man; she gave us the Saviour, Jesus Christ. And Jesus redeemed us from the power of Satan and hell; with His Blood, he washed away our eternal sentence of death and reopened for us the gates of heaven.³⁴³

We, therefore, find the Christian followers of St. Paul living in the Paradise conceived by them. They have no reliable record of the revelation from the Lord or the words of Jesus Christ to support their views. This is so because instead of depending upon the Almighty or Jesus Christ, they depend entirely on the words of St. Paul and his followers.

³⁴¹ *The Creed Explained*, pg. 224.

³⁴² *The Creed Explained*, pg. 232. From where Joseph Baierl got these words of Satan we do not know?

³⁴³ *The Creed Explained*, 232-233.

MAN WAS NOT CREATED TO BE SINLESS

So far as purpose of creation is concerned, no one knows better than the Lord. He had already created heavenly bodies which were subjected to the compulsion to worship the Lord. They enjoyed no power, liberty or free will to transgress any of the commandments of the Almighty. Similarly, trillions and trillions of angels had already been there worshipping the Lord ceaselessly. If sinlessness or perfection had been the purpose of creation, there was no need to create man. Angels and all other creatures were already fulfilling the said requirement without a flaw.

Had the God willed humankind to be sinless, he could have created them in the likeness of the Angels. As against this, He endowed them with such special attributes which were necessary for their test and trial on Earth. Man, therefore, was not free from pains and hardships. He also was not free from fatigue, sleepiness, sickness, misfortune and fear from animals, vagaries of nature and danger from rivals and enemies among his own species. Man had to utilize all the resources around him to meet his needs, to satisfy his hunger, thirst and sex. He needed protection against heat, cold and rain etc. Hatred, selfishness, greed for wealth, lust for power and prestige could always detract him from the straight path.

On the other hand, the Lord had bestowed humankind with well-balanced propensities towards good or evil. They also enjoyed freedom to choose between the right and wrong. The elects of the Lord were the only exceptions who enjoyed special protection from sinfulness (Al-Qur'an 72:27). All other people were open to sinfulness or to righteousness as per the guidance of the Lord. The Almighty knew full well that due to freedom of choice and action humankind could always lean towards sin to gratify their immediate needs, lusts and desires. God did not,

therefore, enjoin absolute sinlessness on humankind. In case of any default or transgression, humankind enjoyed the opportunity to turn to the Lord repentantly to seek mercy and forgiveness from Him.

Duties Assigned to the Vice-gerent

Man, being a creature and slave of the Lord was obliged to obey all the commandments himself and impose the same on earth in his capacity as vicerent of the Lord. The afore stated exalted designation of man prohibits him from bowing before any other creature of the Lord because by worshiping anyone except Allah, he not only creates rival of the Almighty but also degrades himself as the vice-regent of the sovereign Lord. It is, therefore, a clear-cut breach of trust and rebellion on the part of man to associate other Gods with the Lord or to worship anyone else than his creator, the one and the only Lord God of the universe.

Man must pronounce the word of God to others faithfully without any addition or concealment therein. Aside from worshiping no one except the sovereign Lord, the obligations of the vicerent broadly include the promotion of peace, love, social justice and universal brotherhood of man by eradicating pride, bigotry and injustice towards the depressed and the destitute. The Lord has briefly described the afore-stated obligations of man in the beautiful words quoted below:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يُعْظَمُ لَكُمْ تَدَارُؤُونَ

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition. (Al-Qur'an, 16:90)

These and the like are the commandments of the sovereign Lord to establish His kingdom through His Vicegerent on Earth. As no kingdom could be established without a law, i.e. the will of the supreme expressed in specific words for proper understanding of man, therefore the Lord always continued to reveal His word through His

chosen prophets, which has been named as ميثاق or the covenant of the God with man. All the prophets preached the same and served as role models of righteousness to be imitated by their followers.

The covenant, however, had never been unilateral. On the one hand, the Lord disclosed the necessary obligations of man, along with His assurance of grace and ample reward to those who follow the commandments of the Lord meticulously while on the other hand, He admonished the transgressors to refrain from disobedience to the Lord to escape punishment from Him. Humankind was told that there could be no salvation unless and until they turn to the Lord repentantly, seek His forgiveness and help towards the righteous path. It is, however, worth-noting here that the Lord has always been true to His promise and He never failed to fulfill His part of the covenant. Man, on the other hand, failed to discharge his duties and obligations under the covenant again and again, due to which he shall be accountable on the Day of Judgment before the sovereign Lord of the universe.

No Intercession

No one except God is competent enough to forgive the sins nor can anyone take the sins of someone else on him. There is no provision for intercession without prior permission of the Lord. Usually, intercession can be useful to remove misunderstandings between the parties. As regards the Lord, He knows each and every activity of man. As such, there can be no need of any intercession between God and mankind except for seeking mercy from the Almighty. Each individual will have to account for his own deeds on the Day of Judgment. The wishful thinking that Jesus or someone else would be able to expiate the sin of others has nothing to do with teachings of the Old Testament.

We have already quoted John the Baptist advising the people that: "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins."³⁴⁴

It is said that:

They confessed their sins and he baptized them in the Jordan.³⁴⁵

It has also been reported that Jesus too stressed repentance from sins:

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.³⁴⁶

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.³⁴⁷

Jesus advised the Pharisees that:

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.³⁴⁸

He also said:

"The right time has come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!"³⁴⁹

Jesus sent the twelve disciples with the same instructions:

So they went out and preached that **people should turn away from their sins.**³⁵⁰

All this leads us to believe that the way to salvation was faith in the Almighty, repentance from sins and resolve to do good in future.

³⁴⁴ Luk 3:3.

³⁴⁵ Mat 3:6 GNB.

³⁴⁶ Mar 1:14-15 KJV.

³⁴⁷ Mat 4:17 KJV.

³⁴⁸ Mat 3:8-9 KJV.

³⁴⁹ Mar 1:15 GNB.

³⁵⁰ Mar 6:12 GNB.

Species to Bear the Burden of Responsibilities

Each individual was accountable for his own deeds. God-fearing among them were supposed to abstain from sin as far as possible for them. In the event of any transgression; willful or inadvertent, they were expected to bow humbly before the Lord to seek His mercy earnestly. Though humankind had been commanded to refrain from sin or disobedience to the Lord, yet due to their natural inclinations, compelling needs and lusts, they were always exposed to various transgressions. It was due to the said reasons that the almighty addressed jinn and man as ثقلان,³⁵¹ simply because they were the **species bearing burden of responsibility**. Man and Jinn were, therefore, obliged to bow before the Lord to seek mercy and salvation to get rid of the trouble.

In case humankind remained absolutely sinless like angels and did not need to repent or seek mercy of the Lord, they would not be fulfilling the true purpose of their creation. They will then be an unnecessary addition to the trillions and trillions of the sinless angels already existing in the universe. **Living like angels could not, therefore, have fulfilled the purpose of test and trial by the Lord.**

God had been kind enough to provide proper guidance to man to steer on the straight path. His lusts, passions and needs, however, could very often compel him to commit transgressions willfully or inadvertently. The crucial point, therefore, was whether after committing something wrong, man insists on soundness of his action or he surrenders himself before the Lord and confesses his guilt to seek mercy and guidance from Him for his salvation. In the former stance, man follows the tradition of Satan while in the latter, **he becomes follower of Adam and Eve who**

³⁵¹ Al-Qur'an 55:31. ثقلان has different meanings. One of the meanings is the bearers of burden. Allama Asad's interpretation "[ONE DAY] We shall take you to task, O you sin-laden two!" alludes to the same.

were always prone to commit mistakes but enjoyed assurance from the lord to be saved by repentance and seeking His mercy earnestly.

To err is human and to forgive Divine. God is fully aware of the nature on which He created the man and He knows his inclinations towards sin. As such, transgression by Adam and Eve was not a surprise to the Lord. It did not annoy Him to create a permanent estrangement between Him and man. No prophet, from Adam to Muhammad ﷺ ever believed either in the perfection of man or his immunity from sin. A mixed conduct of sinfulness and good deeds was the norm for man. All the prophets rehearsed the message of the Lord that he was always willing to wash them clean from their sins provided they turn to the Lord repentantly and resolve to do good in future. The last two prophets of Israel i.e. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ continued to preach the same message till their death.

God's mercy has no limits and He is always willing to forgive those who seek the same earnestly. The Qur'an quotes the instance of Prophet يونس (Jonah) who was forgiven by the Lord as quoted below:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذُكِّرَ بِمُؤَامِلَةٍ فَبَطَلَ عَنْهُ الْفُلُ فَأَنكَرَ وَكَرِهَ فَأَنكَرَ الْفُلُ وَكَرِهَ النَّاسُ فَأَخْرَجُوهُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَخَرَجْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُخَوِّطُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

And remember Zun-nun, when he departed in wrath: He imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "**There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong!**"! So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: **and thus do We deliver those who have faith.**³⁵²

Humble repentance from one's misdeeds and resolve to do good in future is, therefore, the sure way towards salvation. Anyhow, if human beings committed no sins at all nor did they need to seek mercy of the Lord, they would disqualify themselves to exist as a new species on Earth.

³⁵² Al-Qur'an 21:87

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) had disclosed the same fact to certain over-enthusiastic believers:

Abu Ayyub Ansari reported that Allah's Messenger said: If you were not to commit sins, Allah would have swept you out of existence and would have replaced you by another people who have committed sin, and then asked forgiveness from Allah, and He would have granted them pardon.³⁵³

God is pleased to grant forgiveness

God is always pleased to forgive those who seek mercy and forgiveness from Him earnestly. Only those are lost who continue to persist in sinfulness and arrogantly refuse to seek mercy from the Lord. Infinite mercy of the Lord is evident from the fact that **the Almighty did not reject even the request of Satan**. He sought respite up to the Doomsday from the Almighty which was granted to him. He, however, did not use the said respite either to repent or to apologize for his misconduct. Contrary to the same, Satan vowed to utilize the respite given to him to dissuade people from the straight path towards the Lord.³⁵⁴ The crime of Satan was not followed by his penitence or remorse. Instead of seeking mercy of the Lord, he chose to be rebellious against Him and expressed his evil desire to commit more crimes by inducing innocent people away from the Almighty:

قَالَ أَنظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ (٣) قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ (٤) قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوِيَنِّي لِأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ
صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٥) ثُمَّ لَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أَلَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ
شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ (٦) قَالَ أَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَذْهُومًا مُدْحَوًّا أَلَمْ يَنْتَبِعْ مِنْهُمْ
لَأْمَلَانَ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٧)

He said: "Give me respite till the day they are raised up." (Allah) said: "Be thou among those who have respite." He said: "Because thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way: "Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and

³⁵³ *Sahih Muslim*, Book 37, Hadith Number 6621.

³⁵⁴ *Al-Qur'an* 15:39, 38:82

their left: Nor wilt thou find, in most of them, gratitude (for thy mercies)." **(Allah) said: "Get out from this, disgraced and expelled.** If any of them follow thee,- Hell will I fill with you all."³⁵⁵

The Lord had, however told Satan that *"For over My servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee."*³⁵⁶ Other human beings were also shown the way to seek compassion of the Lord. The Lord did not reject even those who had blundered to follow Satan. They were assured that:

"And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out."³⁵⁷

In addition to the above, Almighty Allah assured the sinners that He was extremely gracious and merciful towards those who turn to Him. The Lord advised Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that:

Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."³⁵⁸

Since Iblees had challenged the Lord to distract human beings from the straight path, the Lord assured humankind of His mercy and forgiveness. They, therefore, need not despair from the mercy of the Lord in any case. People deserting the camp of Satan are always welcomed and consoled by the Lord. All people belong to the Lord. Instead of any estrangement from them, the Lord **God welcomes His lost sheep to His fold.** All prophets were sent to guide the human beings to the all encompassing haven of the Lord. Jesus, too, announced that:

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."³⁵⁹

The parables of the lost coin (Luk 15:8-10) and the lost son (Luk 15:11-32) can serve to explain the pleasure of Lord to retrieve those who had been lost. Following excerpts from

³⁵⁵ Al-Qur'an 7:14-18 (Yusuf Ali)

³⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an 15:42 (Yusuf Ali)

³⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an 65:20 Yousuf Ali.

³⁵⁸ Al-Qur'an 39:53 (Yusuf Ali)

³⁵⁹ Mat 15:24 KJV.

the Parable of the lost sheep provide full elucidation of the theme. Jesus said:

12. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? **13.** And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. **14.** Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.³⁶⁰

Luke renders the same in the following manner:

4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? **5.** And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6.** And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. **7.** I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.³⁶¹

We, therefore, observe that the teachings of the Christians following St. Paul are against the teachings of the Prophets of Israel and especially the teachings of Jesus as quoted above. Factually, Almighty Allah had always been most Gracious and Merciful towards the human beings. He is extremely pleased to welcome the sinners to the asylum when they turn to Him. A tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is enough to elucidate the point:

Narrated Al-Harith bin Suwaid: 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud related to us two narrations: One from the Prophet and the other from himself, saying: A believer sees his sins as if he were sitting under a mountain which, he is afraid, may fall on him; whereas the wicked person considers his sins as flies passing over his nose and he just drives them away like this." Abu Shihab (the sub-narrator) moved his hand over his nose in illustration. (Ibn Mas'ud added): Allah's Apostle said, "Allah is

³⁶⁰ Mat 18:12-14 KJV

³⁶¹ Luk 15:4-7 KJV

more pleased with the repentance of His slave than a man who encamps at a place where his life is jeopardized, but he has his riding beast carrying his food and water. He then rests his head and sleeps for a short while and wakes to find his riding beast gone. (He starts looking for it) and suffers from severe heat and thirst or what Allah wished (him to suffer from). He then says, 'I will go back to my place.' He returns and sleeps again, and then (getting up), he raises his head to find his riding beast standing beside him."³⁶²

God Alone Can Forgive the Sins

Over a period of time, the Christian church claimed having all the powers of God including forgiveness of the sins. Factually, God does not share His glory with anyone in the universe nor can anyone usurp His powers. Fathers of the church, therefore, enjoy no power to accept the confessions or to grant forgiveness to the sinners. It is entirely the prerogative of the Lord alone to forgive or to punish anyone He may please. He says:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.³⁶³

St. Paul's Diversion from the Highway of the Prophets

It was only the ingenuity of certain ingrate among humankind to suggest freedom from obedience to the commandments of the Lord on the plea that they were sons of God or inheritors of His kingdom in the heaven and on Earth. They professed that by union with Christ, the God Son of God, they could become gods themselves. By such presumption, they denied slavery to the Lord and claimed freedom from the Law of Moses (Law of God).³⁶⁴ St. Paul was the first theologian to suggest freedom from the slavery and the Law of the Lord. As against this, he could ill-afford to suggest any such deliverance from the power

³⁶² *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 8, Book 75, Number 320 (see also Number 321).

³⁶³ Mat 3:12 KJV.

³⁶⁴ Rom 7:4-6 (see both KJV & GNB)

and the law of the Romans. St. Paul, in fact, aimed at replacing the kingdom and the law of the Lord with the Roman Rule and law so that people could serve the Romans wholeheartedly. The preachings of St. Paul aimed at abrogation of the Law of Moses, authority of the Lord God as the only king of the Israelites, the primacy of the Holy Land as well as the culture and the language spoken by the Israelites. Many Jews at Jerusalem accused him to forsake Moses, to forbid circumcision and dietary regulations of Israelites. His followers, therefore, attached no importance to Hebrew and Aramaic as the languages of revelations. The efforts to replace Greco-Roman culture, language and law had started from Alexander the Great but culminated during and after the times of St. Paul. Following him, all the four Gospels were written in Koine Greek than in the Hebrew or the Aramaic spoken by Jesus Christ. Christian followers of St. Paul, therefore, had no regard for Jerusalem as the central temple of worship for the followers of Jesus Christ. The ultimate result was the establishment of the supremacy of Roman land, authority, law, language and culture throughout the Empire. St. Paul attached no importance to the words of Jesus Christ that:

You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and money.³⁶⁵

It seems that the evangelists had to emend the actual words of Jesus Christ to conceal the true import of the same. Jesus might have said that "*you cannot serve both God and the Emperor.*" He knew that the high priests, the aristocracy, the well to do individuals and many among the Sadducees either leaned towards Hellenization or had a soft corner for the Roman authorities. The majority of the Jews, however, had always been denying kingship of anyone except the Lord. They believed that:

For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among

³⁶⁵ Mat 6:24 GNB. (See also Luk 16:13)

the nations.³⁶⁶

Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.³⁶⁷

For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.³⁶⁸

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.³⁶⁹

The Israelites, therefore, never accepted the kingdom of the foreigners. W.e.f 720 B.C. to 130 A.D. millions of the Israelites and the Jews had given their lives for the same cause.

The Jews had always been insisting on the Kingdom of God and His law revealed through Moses. There had been numerous insurrections and revolts both against the Greeks as well as the Romans to throw off the yoke of the foreigners. During the childhood of Jesus Christ, one Judas the Galilean appeared as a leader of the popular revolt. He instigated the Jews not to pay taxes to the Romans on the basis that there was no king except God. The insurrection ended with his destruction and dispersion of his followers during the second term of Quirinius as Legate of Syria (6-12 AD). Reportedly Quirinius had been instructed by the emperor to assess Judea Province for taxation purposes.³⁷⁰ Duplicity of the commandment, Law and cults had, therefore, been the main cause of continued dichotomy and enmity between the Romans and the Jews.

Alexander the Great (Reign 336-323 B.C.) had started the policy of Hellenization throughout his empire. Antiochus IV (Reign 175-164 B.C.) had taken the most stringent measures to eliminate Judaism and to replace the same with Hellenism. In spite of extreme persecution and atrocities committed by him he could not succeed in his mission. His successors also met with utter failure. After

³⁶⁶ Psa 22:28 KJV.

³⁶⁷ Psa 44:4 KJV.

³⁶⁸ Psa 47:7 KJV.

³⁶⁹ Zec 14:9 KJV

³⁷⁰ Judas of Galilee, '*Hasting's Dictionary of The Bible*'.

the Greeks, the Romans, too, pursued the same policy of introducing the Roman culture in the Holy Land but they did not succeed to overcome or eliminate the resistance of the Jews. As such, their efforts to unify the subjects within the Roman Empire had met with a failure.

About 300 years after Alexander the Great, the Romans had learnt from their experience that it was impossible to eradicate Judaism without destroying the roots of their faith i.e. strict monotheism, the Law of Moses and the central importance of Jerusalem for the Jews. Consequently, St. Paul was prompted to present a new solution to the issue. They, therefore, propounded the theories which could relieve the Israelites from slavery of the Lord, burden of the Law of Moses, Hebrew as the language of revelation and holiness of Jerusalem as the central place of worship (قِبْلَة) for the followers of Moses. This was the only and the most appropriate way to replace the Kingdom of God, Law of Moses, prime importance of the Holy city, land language and culture of the Israelites with the law, kingdom, culture and the language of the Romans. St. Paul was, therefore, chosen to profess that by believing in Jesus Christ the son of Lord and with their unification with him the Christians had become sons of God. They were no longer slaves but inheritors of the Almighty. As inheritors of the Lord they enjoyed freedom from His law. According to him Jesus had brought an end to the Law of Moses. As such, due to freedom from the slavery of God and abrogation of the law of Moses, the people were free to obey the Roman authorities wholeheartedly as suggested by St. Paul. He preached that:

Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of those in authority? Then do what is good, and they will praise you, because they are God's servants working for your own good. But if you do evil, then

be afraid of them, because their power to punish is real. They are God's servants and carry out God's punishment on those who do evil. For this reason you must obey the authorities---not just because of God's punishment, but also as a matter of conscience. That is also why you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfill their duties. Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.³⁷¹

St. Paul propounded the theory of inheritance of the kingdom of God through union with Jesus Christ the son of God. Followers of Christ, Jews or gentiles, were no longer slaves but sons of God and inheritors of the kingdom of God. Being inheritors of God, they were free from the Law of Moses denounced as a curse by St. Paul. He, therefore, elevated Jesus Christ in such a manner that all authority and glory of God seemed to have been conferred on him. By the self conceited union with Christ, all Christians would share the said glory of God. Those who followed St. Paul could therefore, serve as the most faithful servants of the Roman Empire. Since the Romans had enslaved millions of people from the nations conquered by them, St. Paul also did good service to the Roman cause by advising the slaves to serve their masters wholeheartedly in the manner they served Jesus Christ the Lord. Hence, instead of God the father, it was Jesus His son who could save mankind and decide their fate.³⁷²

³⁷¹ Rom 13:1-7 GNB.

³⁷² Rom 2:16, 2Cor 5:10

FORGIVENESS OF THE LORD

Inspiration for Salvation

As said earlier, Adam and Eve did not resort to arrogance or excuses like those of Satan. They immediately confessed their guilt and implored the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. Their humility and repentance were appreciated by the Almighty in such manner that He himself revealed to them the words to seek forgiveness:

They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost."³⁷³

Hence, to lead humankind towards salvation, there can be no source better than the one inspired by the Lord as recorded above.

We know that the angels had been created by the Lord much before the creation of jinn or man. By nature of their creation, angels enjoyed no liberty to commit sin while Jinn enjoyed freedom to choose between good and evil and to act accordingly. Jinn were created from the flame of fire and instead of submissiveness or self-surrender before the Lord, they were more inclined to pride, stubbornness and haughtiness. Man was created from the essence of Earth much after other creatures. He was equipped with well-balanced inclination both towards good or evil. The complexity in the nature of man exceeded both angels and jinn. Besides the guidance from the Lord, he was also bestowed with intellect and knowledge to affirm his supremacy over the angels and the jinn. Man enjoyed no immunity from sin. There was always a possibility that man could be misled from the straight path through evil suggestions of Satan or lusts and evil desires of his own self. Wrong choice of man could, therefore, lead him to affliction and grief. The only way out of the calamity was

³⁷³ Al-Qur'an 7:23

turning to the Lord repentantly, entreating His mercy, forgiveness and guidance with utmost humility on the part of man. As against this, angels were created with immunity from sin. Since the angels were unable to commit sin, they also did not need to repent for their misdeeds or to seek mercy from the Lord. It was only man who enjoyed a free will to do good deeds or to transgress against the commandments of the Lord which could make them liable to be punished by the Almighty unless they were rescued by Him.

There are two types of people among the transgressors. Some of them do not fear the Lord and are impudent to conceive of their accountability before the Lord. Such people arrogantly continue sinning without paying any heed to repeated admonition from the Lord. They neither turn to the Lord repentantly nor seek mercy from Him. Such are the people who are doomed to be consigned to hell forever. Others are those who on realizing their mistake turn to the Lord repentantly. They humbly seek mercy, forgiveness and guidance from the Lord depending entirely on Him. Allah, therefore, does not turn down the earnest prayers of those who repent. Such are the people who are not only forgiven their sins but the Lord God changes their evils with good deeds and admits them to eternal blissfulness in the paradise. The utmost humility and entire dependence on the Lord for deliverance from the snare of Satan and calamity wrought by one's own hands are, therefore, the qualities that make man the most suitable candidate as Vice-Gerent of the Lord on Earth and His favorite for the paradise in the hereafter.

God's mercy Obliterates Sin

The angels enjoy no liberty or power to commit sin. They, therefore, need not seek mercy from the Lord to be saved. It is only man or jinn who are bestowed with the power to wrong their own souls by disobeying the commandments of the Lord. Among men, there are many who realize their guilt very soon and turn to the Lord repentantly praying to Him earnestly to be saved by Him. **Such a craving is the**

distinctive feature of of humankind compared with other creatures who cannot commit sin. It has the lesson that sinfulness cannot be fatal for man as long as he does not lose his hope in the mercy of the Lord and continues to crave for the same. Sinfulness is a part of the nature of mankind due to which the Lord did not enjoin on them absolute immunity from it. He in fact did not create man to be sinless. In case all the human beings become immune from sin like angels, the Lord may eliminate them and replace them with a species that would be committing sins and prostrating before the Lord God to seek His mercy for their rescue from the calamity. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ therefore, said that if humankind ceased sinning perpetually, the Lord would eliminate them and bring another creature who would commit sins and repent earnestly to seek mercy and forgiveness from the Lord. In addition to Hadith No. 6621 of *Sahih Muslim* Book No. 37, quoted in the previous chapter, we reproduce another Hadith from the same source:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger having said: By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if you were not to commit sin, Allah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace (you by) those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and He would have pardoned them.³⁷⁴

Let us not forget that the Angels represent a creature without free will. As against them, man enjoys the liberty to choose between the good and bad and to act in accordance with his decision. In this respect it will be useful to quote here a passage from Jeffrey Lang's book '*Even Angels Ask*':

"Virtues are abstract concepts and difficult to define, but I believe that we can agree that to grow in virtue at least three things are needed: Free will, or the ability to choose; intellect, so that one is able to weigh the consequences of his or her choices and learn from them; and third, and equally important, suffering and hardship. As we saw, the Qur'an

³⁷⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Book Number 37, Hadith Number 6622.

emphasizes strongly all three of these while discussing man's spiritual evolution. To grow in compassion, for example, is inconceivable without suffering. It also requires choice, the ability to choose to reach out to someone in need or to ignore him. Intellect is necessary so that one can estimate how much for oneself will be invested in showing compassion to the sufferer. Similarly, to be truthful involves a choice not to lie and is heightened when telling the truth may lead to personal loss and suffering, which can be predicted through the use of one's reason."³⁷⁵

The Christian presumption about God's estrangement from man, due to the sin of Adam, finds no support from the Old Testament or the Qur'an. God always loved Adam and his descendants. He continued to provide guidance to them through His prophets sent to each and every community in the world. The Lord, therefore, revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that:

"Verily We have sent thee in truth, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner: and **there never was a people, without a warner** having lived among them (in the past)."³⁷⁶

God's love is also evident from the fact that at many places in the Qur'an, the Lord had been addressing humankind by calling them **يَا بَنِي آدَمَ**, i.e. 'O Ye Children of Adam.' It shows that the Lord always had a great love and concern for Adam and his progeny, due to which he continued to guide them to the proper path. A few verses from the Qur'an containing instructions and warnings from the Lord may also be useful to elaborate the point. God said:

"O ye Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without faith."³⁷⁷

"O ye Children of Adam! whenever there come to you messengers from amongst you, rehearsing My signs unto you,- those who are righteous and mend (their lives),- on

³⁷⁵ *Even Angels Ask* (Lahore; Suhail academy) pg. 51

³⁷⁶ Al-Qur'an 35:24

³⁷⁷ Al-Qur'an, 7:27

them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve."³⁷⁸

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?"³⁷⁹

Allah has made specific mention of Adam as His chosen one and a highly exalted prophet. Qur'an, therefore, vehemently denies St. Paul's assertion of Original Sin attributed to Adam inflicting all His descendants without any exception. Factually all the the Prophets of the Lord enjoyed His protection leading to immunity from sinfulness. God further said that:

"Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imran³⁸⁰ above all people"³⁸¹

We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: and to all We gave favour above the nations:³⁸²

It is worth noting here that instead of permanent estrangement of God from the sinners the revelations from Him assure His love, mercy and forgiveness for them. God said:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say: "O My servants who have transgressed against their

³⁷⁸ Al-Qur'an, 7:35

³⁷⁹ Al-Qur'an, 36:60

³⁸⁰ Imran (Amram of Bible Exo 6:20) was father of Moses and Aron. He and His wife were both Levites. The family of the priests and the prophets in Israel. Even Zachariah, John the Baptist and Maryam, mother of Jesus Christ descended from Amram and Aaron the Levite. The Qur'an, therefore, refers to Maryam as sister (a member of family) of Aaron. (Al-Qur'an 19:28) Spiritual blessings of the Lord usually concentrated on the descendants of Noah, Abraham and Imran as revealed by the Qur'an).

³⁸¹ Al-Qur'an 3:33.

³⁸² Al-Qur'an, 6:84-86 (Yusuf Ali).

souls! despair not of the Mercy of Allah. For Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.³⁸³

The crucial point in the verse quoted above is the lovely manner in which the Lord addressed the sinners. Instead of rebuking them as 'O' *Sinners*', the Lord called them *يا عبادى* i.e. 'O' *my servants*'. This shows that in spite of all types of sins, the Lord did not desert or exclude the sinners from His servants unless and until they permanently turn away from Him. Sinfulness did not create any estrangement from the Lord nor did He exclude the sinners from His servants. Prophet Abraham had said:

"And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?"³⁸⁴

We, therefore, conclude that only those who fall prey to desperation and go astray from the Lord are sure to be Lost.

Sin And Death

As observed earlier, the death is merely the terminus of the respite given to each individual on Earth. It, therefore, cannot be the wages of Sin. Even the most virtuous persons such as the prophets of the Lord had to die after the respite given to them. After enumerating some of the prophets, the Lord said:

"Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah did bestow His Grace,- of the posterity of Adam, and of those who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those **whom We guided and chose**. Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears."³⁸⁵

We, therefore, note that unlike the Christian theologians, the Qur'an does not make Adam the culprit or the accused one for bringing sin or death on man. Adam, in fact, was the Vice gerent of the Lord Who chose and exalted him as His first prophet on earth. He was, therefore, unique to

³⁸³ Al-Qur'an, 39:53 Yusuf Ali.

³⁸⁴ Al-Qur'an, 15:56 Yusuf Ali.

³⁸⁵ Al-Qur'an, 19:58.

serve as bearer of the covenant before whom the Lord made angels prostrate and everything in the universe was bid to serve him.³⁸⁶

Man was created as a mortal, hence, death was the end of his life on Earth. He had been created by the Lord with balanced inclinations towards good or evil. The Lord, therefore, provided man with proper guidance to differentiate between the vice and virtue. The Lord God had perfect foreknowledge about the future conduct of Adam and his descendants. God said:-

1. Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power;- 2. He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;³⁸⁷

It is evident from the above that the Lord had created death and life to test and try the conduct of human beings on earth. It is, therefore, absolutely incorrect to blame Adam for inflicting death or sinfulness on humankind. The Lord in fact had created death and resurrection only to call all the Jinn and human beings to account for their deeds.

Forgiveness of the Lord

It is a grave mistake on the part of human beings that instead of turning to the sovereign Lord, they seek refuge from false deities invented by them. They forget that the Lord had directed them repeatedly to address him for all their needs. God had assured them that their pleas will be responded with gracious acceptance from Him (Al-Qur'an 40:60). It is, therefore, an everlasting truth that the Lord God does not turn down the prayer of His servants provided they seek His mercy earnestly during their regular life before they are apprehended to be brought to task by the Lord. Anyhow, the door for repentance stands closed the moment signs of death or torment from the Lord become visible to man. Prior to the end time, there was no

³⁸⁶ Al-Qur'an 22:65, 31:20.

³⁸⁷ Al-Qur'an 67:1-2

hindrance to the acceptance of the prayer of humble creatures of the Lord. The Qur'an reveals to us that even when Iblees had already flouted the commandment of the Lord, He did not reject his plea to grant him respite till the doomsday. The prayer of Satan was not turned down by the Lord.³⁸⁸ In view of this, we find no justification for human disappointment from the Lord. Sura *Infitaar* deals with God's benevolence as against man's violation of the commandments of the Lord with disappointment from Him. The verse quoted below hints directly at the arrogance of man against the most merciful God of the Universe:-

O man! What has seduced thee from thy Lord Most Beneficent?—³⁸⁹

The Lord God has repeatedly reminded human beings that He is extremely kind and merciful to them and always inclined to forgive their sins provided human beings turn to him repentantly and seek protection from Him as quoted earlier.³⁹⁰

In view of all this, humankind has no justification to be disappointed from the Lord. In case they have wronged their souls, they must turn to the Lord repentantly and seek His mercy with firm faith that the Lord God will be most graciously receiving them in the fold of His mercy and benevolence.

Remember that disappointment from the Lord is the tradition of Satan. The Qur'an also names him ابليس (Iblees) which means the disappointed or the despaired one. It is, therefore, clear that **those who are disappointed from the mercy of Allah are followers of Iblees.**³⁹¹

As such, Adam did not bring any degeneration to humankind. He never went away from the Lord nor did he worship anyone except Him. Many among his descendants, however, were misled by Satan to bow before the creatures instead of the Creator of the universe. In many cases the

³⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an 7:14, 15:36, 38:79

³⁸⁹ Al-Qur'an 82:6

³⁹⁰ Al-Qur'an 39:53 and 15:56

³⁹¹ Satan.

people elevated, the pious men and the heroes among them to the status of gods and their images and statues became the idols of worship of the nations concerned. As such, by bowing before the icons of human heroes, animals, birds, beasts, trees, rocks, and heavenly bodies like sun, moon, and the stars, the human beings degraded themselves from the exalted position of the vicegerent of the Lord to slaves of the creatures the Lord had made subservient to them. Mankind's own misdemeanor, therefore, made him the lowest among the low.³⁹²

Christians deliberately exaggerated vilification of Adam and Eve by presenting a perverted interpretation of Adam's stay in the garden and his return to Earth. Factually, human beings did not inherit any sin or degradation from them. Contrary to their view, humankind inherited the position of the Vice-regent of the Lord and prophet-hood from Adam. Almighty Allah created Adam with the predestination of his installation as deputy of the Lord on earth. This was the unique distinction of Adam not shared by any other creature of the Lord throughout the Universe. Consequently, as soon as God inspired His spirit in the body of Adam, all the angels were directed to prostrate before him to acknowledge his excellence over them. Satan, a jinn, was the only person who considered himself better than man. He willfully violated the commandment of the Lord and became accursed forever. Man's transfer from the garden was, therefore, for his installation on an elevated position than a downfall as misconceived by the Christian theologians.

Purity of Nature

The Old Testament and the Qur'an suggest no inheritance of degeneration, spiritual or physical, from Adam and Eve. Each individual is born with purity of nature and with capabilities to bring improvements in his conduct or to go astray from the Lord by ignoring the guidance from Him.

³⁹² Al-Qur'an 95:4-5.

Hence, instead of wailing over the fall of man or blaming Adam for perversion of their nature, human beings need to ponder the misdeeds and misery wrought by their own hands. Their disobedience to the Lord may subject them to the torment in the hell on the Day of the Judgment before the Lord. On that day each individual will have to account for his own deeds and no one will bear the burden of another. The Lord says:-

38. Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; **39.** That man can have nothing but what he strives for **40.** That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight:

41. Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete;³⁹³

In view of the above, we cannot rely on the **'made easy' and attractive 'theory of salvation' propounded by St. Paul** which provides false complacency to mankind about the wrong deeds done by them. It, factually, negates the principle of recompense in accordance with one's sincere and sustained efforts for improvement in life physical, moral, or spiritual spheres. It also negates the importance of righteous deeds or the conscious efforts of man to surrender his will before the will of the Lord. Nothing can absolve mankind from the obligation that each and every moment of his life is spent with God-consciousness, personal responsibility or obligation to worship no one except Allah. There can be no relief from obedience to the commandments of the Lord whether one is a Jew, Christian, Muslim or follower of any other faith in the world. The wishful thinking that Jesus has taken on him the sins of the Christians is just a mockery of justice and God's Law of punishment and reward. In spite of the fact that the Christian theory of salvation contradicts teachings of Torah and the Prophets, it became popular in the Roman Empire simply because of its compatibility firstly with the traditions in the Hellenized society and secondly for free package of salvation offered by St. Paul. They welcomed it because it posed least restrictions on food, drink and certain indulgences in the West. Paul's assurances for the easiest

³⁹³ Al-Qur'an 53:38-41.

and the shortest way to salvation along with holiness and life-everlasting was enough for them to follow him blindly.

All prophets of the Lord from Adam to Jesus preached worship of one and the Only Lord God of the Universe. None of them knew any Gods besides Allah. God never introduced Jesus or the Holy Spirit as co-equal or co-eternal partners with Him. Hence, the new faith initiated by St. Paul and his followers was only an imitation or borrowing from the Gods worshiped by Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, Persians, Indians and the Egyptians. Even the name 'Jesus', sounds like many human or mythological gods of those nations. As such, the theology of St. Paul, St. John (The Evangelist) and other Christian fathers is an about turn from the religion of all the prophets of God since Adam to Jesus.

ONE LORD GOD & THE PROPHET OF THE COVENANT

No other God besides the Lord

There can hardly be a doubt that Moses and all the prophets of Israel including Jesus himself never knew about any God other than the Almighty. They always continued to preach one God who had no other Gods besides Him. All true prophets of the Israelites firmly believed and rehearsed the words of the first commandment quoted below:

I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.³⁹⁴

Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.³⁹⁵

Since Moses had been the only Lawgiver among the Israelites, all prophets of Israel served as followers of Moses. All of them including John and Jesus believed and rehearsed to their followers the Decalogue starting with the afore-stated commandments. Jesus had been a Jew and the last prophet of the Lord sent towards the Israelites. Mark quotes him replying to one of the Pharisees in the following manner:

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one**

Lord: 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Exo 20:2-3, Due 5:6-7 KJV.

³⁹⁵ Exo 20:23 KJV.

³⁹⁶ Mar 12:28-30 KJV.

Jesus, as such, believed in one Lord God of the Universe. He lived as a strict follower of the faith of Moses from his childhood to his death. He never became an apostate from the said faith. As such, it was impossible for him to preach Trinity than absolute oneness of the Lord. It is a blasphemy against him that he ever claimed to be a God son of God or to suggest Holy Spirit as the third partner in the Triune God propagated by St. Paul and his followers. Moses had been rehearsing to the Israelites that:

And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.³⁹⁷

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:³⁹⁸

Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God.³⁹⁹

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that **the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.**⁴⁰⁰

I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.⁴⁰¹

Further stress on absolute oneness of the Lord can be found in the following:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt

³⁹⁷ Exo 23:13 KJV.

³⁹⁸ Exo 34:14 KJV.

³⁹⁹ Lev 19:4 KJV.

⁴⁰⁰ Deu 4:39 KJV.

⁴⁰¹ Deu 5:6-10 KJV.

teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.⁴⁰²

Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.⁴⁰³

The Israelites were also warned that in case they worship and serve other Gods besides the LORD, they shall surely perish:

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.⁴⁰⁴

The word of God quoted above did not go in vain. It was fulfilled entirely with the destruction of the city, the temple at Jerusalem and Bani-Israel in 70 CE. They had ignored the warning of Moses not to follow the pagan practices in the Land the LORD was giving them. He said:

For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.⁴⁰⁵

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;⁴⁰⁶

After revealing both ways to the Israelites Moses told them to choose between the same. He said:

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go

⁴⁰² Deu 6:4-9 KJV.

⁴⁰³ Deu 10:20 KJV.

⁴⁰⁴ Deu 8:19 KJV.

⁴⁰⁵ Deu 18:14 KJV.

⁴⁰⁶ Deu 7:9 KJV.

after other gods, which ye have not known.⁴⁰⁷

Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.⁴⁰⁸

Alas! In spite of stern warnings from the LORD, the Israelites did not mend their ways. They became proud and rebellious due to their richness and power. The LORD, therefore, rejected them as described in the following:

But Jeshurun⁴⁰⁹ waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.⁴¹⁰

It is, therefore, evident from the above that the Lord God of the Universe did not tolerate any rivals with Him. He also emphatically denied the existence of His sons and daughters. No one except the Lord, therefore, could be worshiped as another God.

⁴⁰⁷ Deu 11:26-28 KJV.

⁴⁰⁸ Deu 6:13-15 KJV.

⁴⁰⁹ The upright or righteous used as an epithet for the Israelites.

⁴¹⁰ Deu 32:15-22 KJV.

Treatment with the False Prophet

Moses also warned the Israelites against sacrifice of children in the fires on the alters of pagan nations around them. He told them not to follow disgusting religious practices of those nations. In addition to the above, Moses told the Israelites to remain on their guards against any false prophets prompting them to worship **Gods that they had not worshiped before**. He said:

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. **And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God,**⁴¹¹ which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: **But thou shalt surely kill him;** thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he

⁴¹¹ Alas! the followers St. Paul did not pay any attention to the commandments of the Lord conveyed to them by Moses. In utter disregard of the same, they believed St. Paul to accept Jesus and the Holy Ghost as additional Gods besides the Lord.

hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.⁴¹²

If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.⁴¹³

In view of the above, the Christians had no ground to believe in any deity except the one Lord God of the Universe worshiped by all the Prophets of the Lord including Jesus Christ. No true prophet had ever been polytheist. Among their followers, however, there had been many who invented or worshiped new gods after the deaths of their prophets. God, therefore, had always been sending some new prophet to purify the faiths of the people.

Shifting Allegiance from God to His Son & Holy Ghost

Long after drowning the people of Noah in the Deluge, destroying the people of A'ad by a furiously violent wind, eliminating the People of Thamud (ثمود) by terrible storm of thunder and lightning (Al-Qur'an 69:3-6), the Lord destroyed the sin-laden cities i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah by showering on them burning sulfur from the sky. Instead of learning a lesson from the same, the people usually forgot about the chastisement of the Lord. Very often the followers of the Prophets did not turn to worship and obey the one and the only Lord God of the Universe. As regards the Christian followers of St. Paul they took these instances to depict the Almighty as a tyrant ruler and relentless judge who had severe estrangement from human beings.

⁴¹² Deu 13:1-10 KJV.

⁴¹³ Deu 13:12-15 KJV.

According to them, the 'young' son of God, too, became accursed⁴¹⁴ due to his ignominious death on the cross of the Romans only to save his followers not from their sinful nature but from the recompense of the same by taking on him the sins of the culprits and giving his own life to expiate the same. For this, they had to diverge from the impartial justice of the Lord and teachings as well as preachings of all the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ who had rehearsed to them the individual responsibility and strict monotheism than a multiplicity of Gods. To divert them from the highway of the Prophets, therefore, St. Paul and his followers had to introduce Jesus Christ as the 2nd person in the Holy Trinity. Jesus was presented as the ultimate savior of humankind. Their followers, thereafter loved, worshiped and praised Jesus much more than the Old God about whom they found in the Genesis that:

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.⁴¹⁵

Teachings of St. Paul increased among his followers the frustration from the Old God of the Universe so that they may turn to accept and worship Jesus Christ as the benevolent and saving deity of the Christians as suggested by him. They, therefore, could easily forsake the rigid, old and tyrant God of the Old Testament to seek protection and salvation through the new, more compassionate, youthful, effective and personal God in Jesus Christ. We, however, note with surprise that even after serving the cause of the Christians in the best possible manner, Jesus too, failed to win allegiance of the Christians for a long time. Soon after

⁴¹⁴ Paul said: "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*" (Gal. 3:13).

⁴¹⁵ Gen 6:5-7 KJV.

the death/ascension of Jesus Christ, they relegated Christ to secondary or tertiary importance as compared to the Holy Spirit. The change of position was apparently based on the following words attributed to Jesus Christ:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.⁴¹⁶

The Christians, therefore, presented the Holy Ghost as the third co-equal and co-eternal partner in the Trinity suggested by them. They, as such, show their ignorance from the **covenant of the prophets** with the Lord as recorded below:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ إِعْرَاضًا قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَتَاكُمْ مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

Behold! Allah took the covenant of the prophets, saying: "I give you a Book and Wisdom; **then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you**; do ye believe in him and render him help." Allah said: "**Do ye agree, and take this my Covenant as binding on you?**" They said: "We agree." He said: "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses."⁴¹⁷

They continued to conceal the fact that the prophets of the Lord had been duty bound to announce the advent of the Prophet promised by the Lord. Keeping in view the written record available today, Abraham was perhaps the first one whose prayer we find in the Qur'an. God revealed that:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ

⁴¹⁶ Mat 12:31 KJV. We also observe a willful change in the words revealed to Jesus Christ by the Lord. By placing the 'Hoy Ghost' instead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Christian fathers have committed concealment as well as fraudulent change in the revelation. We shall be discussing the same in detail in our forthcoming book '*The Promised Prophet and Paran*'.

⁴¹⁷ Al-Qur'an 3:81 (Yusuf Ali).

أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ .

127. And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (With this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. **128.** "Our Lord! make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (will); and show us our place for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for Thou art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. **129.** **"Our Lord! send amongst them a Messenger of their own,** who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For Thou art the Exalted in Might, the Wise.⁴¹⁸

The Prophet Abraham had made the said prayer at the time he was raising walls of Ka'aba in the company of Ishmael at Makkah. It is, therefore, evident from the same that Abraham had beseeched the Almighty **to send a prophet from the progeny of Ishmael at Makkah.** After Abraham, Jacob too had predicted the shifting of lawgiver (religious leadership) and the worldly authority from the Israelites to their brethren i.e. the Ishmaelites. The same is also evident from the departing message of Jacob to his sons. He said:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.⁴¹⁹

In the verse quoted above, Jacob had foretold the Israelites that descendants of Judah (the Jews) will continue to wield authority and remain custodians of the Divine law till the advent of '*Shiloh*' a term connoting the advent of the great prophet as well as the king to establish the kingdom of God on Earth. Muhammad ﷺ was, therefore, the long awaited promised Prophet of the Lord foretold by all the prophets who had preached their followers to obey him.

⁴¹⁸ Al-Qur'an, 2:127-29 Yusuf Ali.

⁴¹⁹ Gen 49:10 KJV.

After Jacob, Moses had been the greatest lawgiver among the Israelites. He went into great detail⁴²⁰ to describe the advent of Prophet of the covenant and to stress that the people of Israel must not turn away to any other source of guidance than the said Prophet ﷺ who will be the only trust worthy guide towards the Lord. As a final message from him, therefore, Moses warned the Israelites to refrain from pagan practices in the Promised Land. He advised them to follow the guidance of the promised Prophet ﷺ as quoted below. He said:

9. When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. **10.** There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, **11.** Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. **12.** For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. **13.** Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. **14.** For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

A New Prophet like Moses:

15. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, **of thy brethren, like unto me;** unto him ye shall hearken; **16.** According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. **17.** **And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. 20.** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that

⁴²⁰ Deu 18:14-20, 33:2.

prophet shall die. **21.** And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?⁴²¹

Certain things are absolutely clear from the words of Moses quoted above.

1: That God will be sending a prophet to guide the human beings. The Prophet shall be a human being than a God, an angel, a spirit or Holy Ghost. He had, therefore, to be a man having likeness with Moses in many aspects.

2: That the Prophet shall be not from the Israelites but from amongst their brethren. He shall also be like Moses in many respects.

3: That the Lord will put his words in the mouth of the Prophet who shall be rehearsing among his followers the words or commandments revealed by the Lord.

4: That whosoever may refuse to hearken the words of the Lord conveyed through the promised prophet will be answerable to the Lord God of the Universe.

5: That the prophet shall be held accountable for conveying any message from the Lord which the Lord had not given him.

6: That the Prophet speaking in the name of other gods than the Almighty will be put to death.

God as such, had warned the Israelites to take revenge from those who refused to obey or follow the message of the Lord delivered through the Promised Prophet . In this respect, they must also remember the curses of Moses for those who disobeyed the commandments of the Lord (Deu 27:11-26).

It was, therefore, absolutely clear that neither a new God in the shape of human beings nor some Holy Spirit was likely to come to guide the human beings. Even the angels could not be deputed for the said purpose. The promised one had to come from human beings i.e. from the brethren of the

⁴²¹ Deu 18:9-21 KJV.

Israelites i.e. the Ishmaelites. He would be a prophet like Moses than a new God or a spirit. His advent and likeness with Moses had also been affirmed by the Qur'an in the following words:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿٥﴾

We have sent to you, (O men!) a messenger, to be a witness concerning you, even as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh.⁴²²

The original words of Moses as well as of Jesus Christ had been lost irretrievably because the Israelites as well as the Christians had different versions of the same in the languages not known to the prophets. They could, thereafter, interpret their own versions of the words of the Lord to confuse the readers more and more and to take them away from the truth. Hence instead of the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the earliest Christian fathers like St. Paul perverted the prophecies of the prophets so that the followers may believe in the Holy Ghost as the third partner in the Trinity introduced by them. The revelation about the prophet promised by the Lord (i.e. the spirit of the truth) was, therefore, camouflaged under the terms such as 'Paraclete', 'comforter' or the Holy Ghost being the third Partner in the Triune God of the Christians. It is, however, worth noting here that from Adam to Jesus Christ, the Lord had always been sending His messengers from human beings instead of the angels or spirits. St. Paul and his followers, therefore, diverged from the highway of the true prophets of the Lord.

Prophet Like Moses:

The Christians must also keep in mind that Jesus was like Moses just only in two aspects. First that he was a prophet and the 2nd that he was an Israelite. The readers will, therefore, note that the promised prophet had to be raised from the 'brethren' of Israel than the Israelites itself. Jesus being an Israelite could not be the promised one. He neither corresponded to the prayer of Abraham at Makkah nor was he fulfilling the prophecy of Jacob as quoted

⁴²² Al-Qur'an, 73:15 Yusuf Ali.

earlier. He never claimed to be the promised one of the Lord. In response to the messengers sent by John the Baptist asking him:

(...) Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?⁴²³

Instead of saying 'yes', to the messengers, Jesus hesitated to reply in the positive. Luke, therefore, records an indirect reply of Jesus to the messengers of John in the following:

22. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.⁴²⁴

It is, therefore, obvious from the above that instead of confessing himself as the promised one, Jesus referred to the miracles wrought by him. No doubt the miracles could prove Jesus as a prophet but not the promised one of the Lord. The only person who fulfilled the contents of the prayer of Abraham and prophecies of the Prophets like Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist and Jesus himself was the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and no one else.

Instead of likeness with Moses, Jesus in fact was different from him in many respects. While Moses had a natural birth from a human father, Jesus was born through infusion of a spirit (روح) by the Almighty through his messenger i.e. روح الامين (Al-Qur'an 3:45-46, 19:16-21, 21:91, 86:12) so that he may serve as a sign being the last warner of the Lord among the Israelites. Undoubtedly, God can create anything just by His commandment 'Be' and it is (Al-Qur'an 36:82). As such, Jesus was born through a special commandment of the Lord as revealed by the Qur'an. It is, therefore, blasphemous against the Lord God of the Universe to attribute any son to Him. God had emphatically denied the same (Al-Qur'an Ch. 112).

⁴²³ Luk 7:19 KJV.

⁴²⁴ Luk 7:22 KJV.

There had been no similarities in the life accounts or the acts and deeds of Moses as compared with Jesus Christ. Muhammad ﷺ, however, had been just like Moses in many respects. Both Moses and Muhammad ﷺ were born from human fathers like all other people in the world. They lived among their communities for longer times as compared to Jesus. They kept themselves involved in all matters concerning leadership, guidance and implementation of the Law of the Lord which survived as traditions of those prophets among them. Jesus, however, had little time to stay among the community or to guide them in respect of worshipping the Lord or to perform the rituals in accordance with his teachings. As such, we find no accurately preserved record of his teachings after him. Whatever we find about him today is, therefore, Jesus of faith than the historical Jesus based on faithfully reported words of his companions. This was the reason that Joel Carmichael observed that:

We are a universe away from Jesus.

If Jesus came, 'only to fulfil' the Law and the Prophets;

If he thought that 'not an iota, not a dot' would 'pass from the Law', that the cardinal commandment was 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord is one', and that 'no one was good but God';

If he actually considered himself 'sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel', and thought it wrong 'to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs';

If despairing of the establishment of the Kingdom of God by divine intervention alone he took to action, and assaulted the lords of the world by violence;

If his undertaking was frustrated and he was executed as a rebel against the state;

What would he have thought of Paul's handiwork!

Paul's triumph meant the final obliteration of the historic Jesus; he comes to us embalmed in Christianity like a fly in amber.⁴²⁵

Moses as well as Muhammad ﷺ had been polygamous and bestowed by the Lord with sons as well as daughters. Both of them served as leaders of their nations in their worldly

⁴²⁵ Joel Carmichael, *The Death of Jesus*, (Middlesex, Penguin Books Ltd, England, 1962), p. 216.

affairs (including various wars). They also continued to provide religious guidance to their followers for decades together. Ultimately both of them died natural deaths. For further details, please refer to our forthcoming book *'The Promised Prophet and Paran'*.

Muhammad ﷺ had been more conspicuous than Moses in establishing the kingdom of God on earth, in purification of faith and perfection of law.⁴²⁶ He was the only prophet who succeeded in creating the best society of people on Earth (Al-Qur'an 3:110). The Lord also took on Him to preserve His message in its original form, words, phrases and the language it was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ (Al-Qur'an 15:9). As such, the final message of the Lord became immutable for all times to come. The said message is available in its pristine purity throughout the world. Those who crave for the true message from the Lord can, therefore, turn to the Qur'an for the same.

It was with the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the 'sceptre' of authority and lawgiver (religious leadership) went out of the Israelites to the descendants of their brethren i.e. the Ishmaelites in Arabia. Jesus also seems to have endorsed the prophecy of Jacob in the following:

42. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? **43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** **44.** And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.⁴²⁷

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, came as the promised one of the Lord to perfect the religion and to establish the

⁴²⁶ On the day of Hajjat-ul-Wada the Almighty had revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that: "*This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*" (Al-Qur'an 5:3)

⁴²⁷ Mat 21:42-44 KJV.

kingdom of God on Earth. The guidance given by him did not pertain only to the Arabs but to all human beings on earth for all times to come. The Lord addressed him in the following manner:

We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.⁴²⁸

God also said:

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.⁴²⁹

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as such was a messenger of the Lord deputed to guide entire humankind on Earth. It is, therefore, erroneous to consider him merely as a prophet sent towards the Arabs. God sent him as a mercy towards all creatures who enjoy equal opportunity to seek benevolence of the Lord through him.

Referring to the common misconception of the non-believers that the guidance from the Lord should have come through some spirits or angels etc., the Lord revealed that:

94. What kept men back from belief when Guidance came to them, was nothing but this: they said, "Has Allah sent a man (like us) to be (His) Messenger?" **95.** Say, "If there were settled, on earth, angels walking about in peace and quiet, We should certainly have sent them down from the heavens an angel for a messenger."⁴³⁰

The non-believers had, therefore, failed to follow the wisdom of the Lord to send a guide out of the species to be guided by him. This was so because besides conveying the message of the Almighty, the Prophets had to serve as role-models among the communities to implement all the commandments of the Lord and His law on Earth. God said:

"O ye assembly of Jinns and men! came there not unto you messengers from amongst you, setting forth unto you My signs, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say: "We bear witness against ourselves." It was the

⁴²⁸ Al-Qur'an 34:28 Yusuf Ali.

⁴²⁹ Al-Qur'an 21:107 Yusuf Ali.

⁴³⁰ Al-Qur'an 17:94-95 Yusuf Ali.

life of this world that deceived them. So against themselves will they bear witness that they rejected Faith.⁴³¹

In case the Prophet belonged to some superior species other than the human beings, the people would find an appropriate excuse for their inability to follow him. The Lord had, therefore, revealed about the usual reply of the Prophets to the objections of idolaters or non-believers that:

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١١)

Their messengers said to them: "True, we are human like yourselves, but Allah doth grant His grace to such of his servants as He pleases. It is not for us to bring you an authority except as Allah permits. And on Allah let all men of faith put their trust."⁴³²

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, too, was advised by the Almighty to proclaim that:

Say: "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man, a messenger?"⁴³³

Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your Allah is one Allah: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner."⁴³⁴

Say thou: "I am but a man like you: It is revealed to me by Inspiration, that your Allah is one Allah: so stand true to Him, and ask for His Forgiveness." And woe to those who join gods with Allah,⁴³⁵

In view of the above, we have no grounds to assume that the Lord would ever send a messenger towards humankind from some species other than their own. As such, distraction from Monotheism to Trinity is a clear-cut

⁴³¹ Al-Qur'an 6:130 Yusuf Ali.

⁴³² Al-Qur'an 14:11 Yusuf Ali.

⁴³³ Al-Qur'an 17:93 Yusuf Ali.

⁴³⁴ Al-Qur'an 18:110 Yusuf Ali.

⁴³⁵ Al-Qur'an 41:6 Yusuf Ali.

diversion from the way of all the prophets of the Lord i.e. from Adam to Muhammad ﷺ.

THE JUDGMENT

God's Mercy Exceeds Everything

In response to a prayer of Moses, the Almighty had said:

قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

.... He said: "With My punishment I visit whom I will; **but My mercy extendeth to all things**. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our signs;⁴³⁶

It, therefore, transpires from the above that while **God's punishment may be confined to a limited sphere, His mercy is extensive enough to cover each and everything in the universe**. His mercy will surely shield those who generally do good but occasionally they too err to go away from the straight path. The Almighty revealed to the Holy Prophet that:

Say: "To whom belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth?" Say: "To Allah. **He hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy....**"⁴³⁷

The Christians, however, believe that man by virtue of his creation in the likeness of God was supposed to exhibit perfection in His characteristics. Falling short of the said standard, humankind was expected at least to be sinless like the Angels. In the said background, the transgression of Adam in the Garden was far from the standard conduct expected from Adam and Eve. The first and the only lapse of Adam was, therefore, termed as Original Sin inflicting degeneration and death on Adam and his progeny. Such erroneous concepts of the Christians were neither based on a revelation of the LORD nor teachings of Moses as well as Jesus Christ. They show no awareness of the fact that God

⁴³⁶ Al-Qur'an 7:156 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴³⁷ Al-Qur'an 6:12 (Yusuf Ali).

had created humankind with the purpose of testing and trying them under the challenging circumstances on Earth. It was for the said purpose that the Almighty created humankind with well-balanced dispositions towards good and evil. Although the LORD had provided guidance to human beings through His prophets, yet they were granted freedom to choose between right or wrong and to act in accordance with their own choice. They had equal chances of doing good by obedience to the LORD or to transgress the commandments to fulfill lusts and desires of their nature. **The LORD, therefore, had perfect fore-knowledge of sinfulness of his creatures.** Instead of condemning them as lost forever, the LORD had been assuring his mercy and forgiveness to retrieve them and to guide them towards the path towards salvation. God revealed that:

To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward.⁴³⁸

(...) Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties. And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.⁴³⁹

Bible also has repeatedly assured forgiveness of the Lord to the repentant sinners.⁴⁴⁰

Undoubtedly, no one had better knowledge about the nature of man than the Creator Himself. The LORD, therefore, admonished human beings repeatedly so that they may refrain from disobedience to the LORD to save themselves from various punishments including the perdition forever. After the Torah, Qur'an is the only book of the revealed religions which highlights forgiveness and mercifulness of the LORD. 113 out of 114 chapters of the Qur'ān start with the following:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, **Most Gracious, Most Merciful.**

⁴³⁸ Al-Qur'an 5:9 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴³⁹ Al-Qur'an 2:268 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁴⁰ Psa 103:10-12, Isa 1:18, 43:25, 55:7, Micah 7:18-19 etc.

Further stress on the mercy and compassion of the LORD is also evident from His attributive names such as **رحمن (Most Gracious)**, **رحيم (Most Merciful)**, **غفور (Oft-forgiving)** and **غفار (Forgiving again and again)** mentioned about 505 times in the Qur'ān.

Unluckily, neither any of the 66 or 72⁴⁴¹ books of the Bible starts in the name of Almighty Allah nor mentions the bounteous blessings, mercy and forgiveness of the Lord to the beginners.

The story of Adam in the Genesis reveals only a part of the truth. It refers to Adam's lapse and transfer from the Garden but fails to reveal that on seeking mercy and forgiveness from the LORD, the Almighty had not only forgiven his inequity there and then but He also chose him to the exalted position of His first prophet on earth. It was on the earth that Adam was installed as vicegerent of the LORD which was the position of unique nobility predestined for him. Besides numerous other blessings for Adam on earth, the LORD also honored Adam and his progeny in such a manner that the most exalted prophets including Enoch, Noah, Hud, Swaleh, Abraham, Shoaib, Moses, Ilyas, David, John, Jesus and Muhammad ﷺ were raised from the descendants of Adam. In addition to the above, the Lord made everything in the heavens and the earth subservient to the cause of His Viceroy on earth.

The Vengeful Judge

The Christian theologians depict the Lord only as a judge duty bound to dispense justice strictly. While doing so, they ignore absolute sovereignty and infinite mercy of the LORD. They leave no provision for God to entertain mercy appeals or to forgive the lapses of His slaves. About Adam, they proclaim:

Death was imposed on man as a punishment because God is

⁴⁴¹ The protestants have canonized only 39 books of the Old Testament excluding 6 books as Apocrypha while the same form part of the Catholic Old Testament.

holy and just.... That was a just punishment not cruelty on the part of God.⁴⁴²

The concept contradicts the repeated assurance of the Lord in the Old Testament to forgive the repentant sinners. It is also against the teachings of the prophets such as quoted below:

In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.⁴⁴³

Ezekiel has been much more elaborate to reveal the standard of the judgment of the LORD:

Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. **O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.**⁴⁴⁴

According to the scripture, however, **the goodness of Jesus will save only the life of Jesus.** No one else will

⁴⁴² Joseph J. Baierl, *The Creed Explained*, 5th Edition, (Rochester; Art Print Shop, CATACHETICAL Guild, St. Paul, USA, 1943) p. 207, 208.

⁴⁴³ Jer 31:29-30 (KJV).

⁴⁴⁴ Eze 33:12-20 (KJV).

be covered by the righteous deeds of Jesus Christ. As regards St. Paul, his words cannot supersede the verdict of the Almighty.

Justice with Magnanimity

To pretend expiation of sin through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, therefore, contradicts the revelations of the LORD accepted by the prophets including Jesus Christ. Nothing, however, can impose any restriction on the absolute discretion of the LORD to punish or to forgive anyone He may please. Instead of stressing on strict or blind justice, the Qur'ān enjoins justice to promote human welfare and magnanimity.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يُعْظَمُ لَكُمْ تَدَبُّرُونَ

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.⁴⁴⁵

Here is another rendering of the verse quoted above:

God commands justice, kindness and giving their [due to] near relatives, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and transgression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed.⁴⁴⁶

Restoration of rights and equitable recompense with benevolence is, therefore, the criteria for justice in Islam. As against this, the doctrine of Original Sin stresses on strict justice as mandatory for the LORD. It deprives the Almighty from His discretion to be merciful or to forgive the repentant sinners. As such, the Christians also ignore the dictum that '*he who is merely just, is cruel*'. No doubt the Lord commands us to do justice but instead of reflecting any cruelty, it must also keep in view kind considerations

⁴⁴⁵ Al-Qur'an 16:90 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁴⁶ Al-Qur'an 16:90 (Wahiduddin Khan).

towards the culprits and the society. It was perhaps due to such thoughts that Abraham Lincoln observed that:

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.⁴⁴⁷

Normally a judge is required to maintain balance between the rights of the individuals or the communities. Anyone infringing on the rights of another has to restore the same. Similarly, whosoever causes injury to someone else must suffer a similar punishment for the same. The LORD, therefore, does not forgive the transgressors unless the wronged persons agree to forgive the wrong-doers. As regards the rights of the Almighty, He has the absolute discretion to forgive or to punish anyone He may please. It must, therefore, be kept in mind that while each of the creatures is answerable to God, He is not answerable to anyone in the Universe. The Qur'ān reveals that:

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).⁴⁴⁸

Human beings can cause no injury or loss to the LORD. They also possess nothing to make amends for the wrong done by them. The only recourse for them is to repent and to seek mercy from the Almighty. For the purpose, they may implore His mercy and forgiveness through the words inspired by the LORD:

Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.⁴⁴⁹

Adam and Eve's transgression in the garden could be termed as a venial sin by the merciful Lord. He, therefore, did not count it as a capital crime like polytheism, idolatry murder, fornication, theft, dacoity, deception, or falsehood. The Lord rather attributed it to forgetfulness of Adam and Eve. They in fact had no intention to disobey the Almighty. No restoration of rights was involved in the matter. The matter was entirely between the humble repentant slaves

⁴⁴⁷ brainyquotes.com

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Qur'an 21:23 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Qur'an 7:23 (Yusuf Ali).

and the Omnipotent master who could punish them or forgive them as per His own sweet will. God, therefore, did not need to demonstrate dispensation of justice in the open court. In His utter grace, He not only forgave their lapse but also exalted Adam as His first prophet and vice-gerent on Earth.

All acts and deeds of humankind are evaluated in Accordance with the intention behind the same. Due to utmost importance of the tenet, it has been recorded as the first Hadith in *Sahih Bukhari*:

عن عمر بن الخطاب رضى الله عنه - قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِءٍ مَا نَوَىٰ"⁴⁵⁰

Narrated 'Umar bin Al-Khattab: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, **"The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions** and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. ...

Adam and Eve had committed the transgression only due to seduction of Satan.⁴⁵¹ They had no ill-will against the Almighty. Their lapse was incidental than intentional. It was also not mandatory for the Lord to observe formalities of some codified law to adjudicate the matter. Those who insist that strict justice was the only option before the Lord, deny discretion and sovereignty to Him. Such people depict the Lord as relentless, vengeful and bloodthirsty judge only to drive the people away in search of some more compassionate and benevolent deity than the God of the Old Testament.

Blood Sacrifice to Expiate Sin

The Christian fathers argue that God was just and it was against His principles of justice that He could forgive the sin without exacting blood sacrifice to expiate the same. We, however, observe that blood sacrifice had nowhere been ordained to expiate each and every sin of man. The

⁴⁵⁰ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 1, Hadith Number 1.

⁴⁵¹ Al-Qur'an 2:36.

assumption was essentially incorrect even according to the Law of Moses. The Lord had ordained on him that:

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ
وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

We ordained therein for them: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal." But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (No better than) wrong-doers.⁴⁵²

We, therefore, do not find any obligation on humankind to offer blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb for each and every sin committed by them. It had never been the mandate of the Lord that blood sacrifice was necessary to expiate the venial sins. No prophet of the Lord including Jesus Christ ever preached the blood sacrifice as a must for expiation of sins.

St. Paul also professed that all human beings had sinned in Adam and Eve. It was impossible for them to find an unblemished victim to expiate their sins. Humankind was, therefore, in a helpless condition. To fulfill needs of justice and also to save the sinners, the Lord had no option except to offer His firstborn and the only son i.e. Jesus Christ for vicarious sacrifice on the Roman Altar. Paul was, therefore, the first person to insist on vicarious atonement and blood sacrifice to expiate the sins. He said:

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.⁴⁵³

The afore-stated suggestion, however, denies the repentance by the sinners and discretion of the Lord to forgive the wrongs done by His slaves. God was supposed to act merely as an enrolled judge bound to act under some codified procedure. As such, the Old God had no powers or provisions to remit even the first venial sin of Adam and

⁴⁵² Al-Qur'an 5:45 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁵³ Heb 9:22 KJV.

Eve. According to St. Paul, such prerogative was perhaps enjoyed only by Jesus the new *de facto* God suggested by him. Since the Lord God of the Old Testament had no powers to forgive the repentant sinners directly, therefore, he had to adopt the stratagem of begetting a son without a wife only to offer him as a blood sacrifice on the Roman Altar to expiate the sins of those who confessed Jesus as the Lord and the new savior of humankind. We, however, find no good reason for any such pretension when the sovereign Lord was himself competent enough to forgive or punish any one of His creatures.

The longer course seems to have been adopted only to stress indispensability of Jesus as the ultimate savior as well as a magnanimous and mightier god than the superannuated God of Torah. The inefficacy of God the father would, as such, oblige humankind to confess Jesus Christ as the dynamic and youthful God to save his worshipers. For this, they had to take a U-turn from the highway of the prophets including Jesus Christ. St. Paul, as such, contradicted not only the Old Testament but also the forth coming revelations in the New Testament⁴⁵⁴ and the Qur'an. All these books repeatedly deny the existence of any Gods besides the Lord who had no father, no son nor any equal in the Universe.

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.⁴⁵⁵

They say: "Allah hath begotten a son" :Glory be to Him.-Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him.⁴⁵⁶

Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me. And they say: "(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten offspring. "Glory to Him! they are (but)

⁴⁵⁴ Due 4:6, 4:35, 32:39, Isaiah 43:10, Mark 12:29 and about 38 other verse.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Qur'an Chapter 112 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:116 (Yusuf Ali).

servants raised to honour. They speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His Command.⁴⁵⁷

God is, therefore, the only and the unique sovereign Lord God of the universe enjoying unlimited powers to punish or to forgive His slaves as per His own sweet will.⁴⁵⁸ No human description of His attributes can be relied upon. Only the revelations of the Lord describe the same adequately.

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an 21:25-27 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁵⁸ Al-Qur'an 2:284.

GUIDANCE FOR SALVATION

No Equality between the Righteous and the Evil-doers

To dispel the misconception of the nonbelievers that evil-doers may be held equal with the righteous in the end or they may achieve salvation through some other shortcut, the Lord declared emphatically that:

What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds,- that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make. Allah created the heavens and the earth for just ends, and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned, and none of them be wronged.⁴⁵⁹

It must, therefore, be kept in mind that God's unchanging law is based on justice. Everyone male or female must receive the reward of his own endeavor. God revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that:

To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have we prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute;⁴⁶⁰

In spite of the wishful thinking of certain communities to transfer burden of their sins to others or to be benefited from the holiness, sacrifice or intercession of some other God or son of God, the same cannot be relied upon simply because it is against the universal justice of the Lord. The Qur'an, therefore, asserts emphatically that everyone will

⁴⁵⁹ Al-Qur'an 45:21-22 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Qur'an 5:48 (Yusuf Ali).

receive the recompense of what he himself has done. It says:

That man can have nothing but what he strives for;⁴⁶¹

And if any do evil, their faces will be thrown headlong into the Fire: "Do ye receive a reward other than that which ye have earned by your deeds?"⁴⁶²

On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns....⁴⁶³

It is, therefore, useless to believe that anyone will be able to grab good deeds of others. Similarly, no burden of others will be placed on us. Adam and Eve alone will be accountable for their transgressions if any. Their descendants will not be called to account for the wrong alleged to them. No injustice will be done by the Lord. Human beings will not receive any share from good or evil deeds of Adam, the prophets the Saints or the evil ones among their ancestors or descendants. Similarly, no other person may receive any benefit from the righteous deeds of Jesus Christ. The O.T. is quite clear on it:

Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. (...) Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.⁴⁶⁴

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.⁴⁶⁵

Each one will have the meed of his own deeds. The Lord revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to declare:

Say: "Shall I seek for (my) Cherisher other than Allah, when He is the Cherisher of all things (that exist)? Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens

⁴⁶¹ Al-Qur'an 53:39 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁶² Al-Qur'an 27:90 (Yusuf Ali). See also 10:52, 36:54, 37:39.

⁴⁶³ Al-Qur'an 2:286 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁶⁴ Eze 14:14 & 20 KJV.

⁴⁶⁵ Eze 18:20 KJV.

can bear the burden of another. Your goal in the end is towards Allah: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein ye disputed."⁴⁶⁶

Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) "Read thine (own) record: **Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee.**"⁴⁶⁷

Humankind has also been admonished that:

If ye did well, ye did well for yourselves; if ye did evil, (ye did it) against yourselves....⁴⁶⁸

One Day every soul will come up struggling for itself, and every soul will be recompensed (fully) for all its actions, and none will be unjustly dealt with.⁴⁶⁹

Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds.⁴⁷⁰

Allah is never unjust in the least degree: If there is any good (done), He doubleth it, and giveth from His own presence a great reward.⁴⁷¹

And when the Graves are turned upside down;- (Then) shall each soul know what it hath sent forward and (what it hath) kept back. O man! What has seduced thee from thy Lord Most Beneficent?⁴⁷²

Initially, even St. Paul had been preaching that:

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and **revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his**

⁴⁶⁶ Al-Qur'an 6:164 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an 17:13-14, (Yusuf Ali), see also Al-Qur'an 78:21-30.

⁴⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an 17:7 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an 16:111 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Qur'an 74:38 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁷¹ Al-Qur'an 4:40 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁷² Al-Qur'an 82:4-6 (Yusuf Ali).

deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified....).⁴⁷³

The wishful thinking that actual sins the individuals commit by exercising their own free will may be excused under the so called original sin of Adam and Eve is neither justified by reason nor supported by any authentic revelation in the Old Testament or the Qur'an. The human courts in the Christian world grant no relaxation to criminals for their transgressions against divine or moral law on the plea of inheritance of degenerated nature from our first parents. Christ's intercession or expiation for the atonement of the sins of the individuals is also not accepted anywhere in the world. Each individual has to atone for his own crimes simply because he misused his discretion, time, money, power and intellect etc. against the guidance from the Lord merely to gratify his vain desires and lusts. No one can bear the burden of another. If others could be made to pay for the sins of the culprits there could be no injustice greater than that. Similarly, the wishful thinking to receive good rewards from the righteous deeds of Jesus Christ or others contradicts the universal Law of the Almighty. The unchanging law of the Lord is loud and clear on the issue.

Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; That man can have nothing but what he strives for; That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight: Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete; That to thy Lord is the final Goal;⁴⁷⁴

Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burdens if one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load. Not the

⁴⁷³ Rom 2:2-13 KJV.

⁴⁷⁴ Al-Qur'an 53:38-42 (Yusuf Ali).

least portion of it can be carried (by the other). Even though he be nearly related..... And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his own soul; and the destination (of all) is to Allah.⁴⁷⁵

Each One to Be Recompensed for His Own Deeds

God's covenants, in fact, aimed at providing guidance to humankind to purify them as a pre-requisite to complete His favor on them. Each individual was, therefore, obliged to worship the Lord and to obey all His commandments for his own wellbeing on earth and for an everlasting life of bliss and happiness in the Hereafter. In view of this, it was vain desire of the individuals to avoid their own liabilities of the covenant by seeking refuge under the so-called sin of Adam and Eve. Similarly, no one can either intercede on the part of others or expiate for their sins. Since the Lord had granted freedom of choice and action to everyone during his life on earth, each individual was liable to account for his good or evil deeds.

The Qur'an has asserted forcefully that every person will be accountable for his own deeds:

But how (will they fare) when we gather them together against a day about which there is no doubt, and each soul will be paid out just what it has earned, without (favour or) injustice?⁴⁷⁶

That Allah may repay each soul what it hath earned. Lo! Allah is swift at reckoning.⁴⁷⁷

Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; who ever works evil, it is against his own soul: nor is thy Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants.⁴⁷⁸

If any one does a righteous deed, it ensures to the benefit of his own soul; if he does evil, it works against (his own soul).

⁴⁷⁵ Al-Qur'an 35:18 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁷⁶ Al-Qur'an 3:25 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁷⁷ Al-Qur'an 14:51 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Qur'an 41:46 (Yusuf Ali). See also 6:29.

In the end will ye (all) be brought back to your Lord.⁴⁷⁹

Repentance & Lord's Mercy the Only way to Salvation

We learn from the Qur'an that the Lord had willed to test and try the role of human beings on Earth. He, therefore, created them with such complexity of nature that they could lean towards good or evil deeds alternately. Due to the said liberty, both ways were open to them. Keeping in view the guidance from the Lord, they could always refrain from sin and worship Him abiding by His commandments. Since, majority of humankind were likely to give priority to their immediate needs and gains over the eventual wellbeing, the Lord guided them that:

But those will prosper who purify themselves, And glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer Day (behold), **ye prefer the life of this world; But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.**⁴⁸⁰

We, however, observe that in spite of the afore-stated guidance from the Lord humankind had been faltering from the straight path. Being aware of the susceptibility of humankind to sin, God did not enjoin on them to be immune from sinfulness. Contrary to this, he guided them to repent and to turn to the Lord to seek mercy and forgiveness from Him each time they went off the way. The Lord would be pleased to forgive them again and again provided they seek mercy and forgiveness from Him with utter humility and remorse on their part. Others who behave as nonbelievers, hypocrites or polytheists may be consigned to eternal torment in the Hell. This was done only to sort out the non-believers from the faithful and righteous among them. God said:

(With the result) that Allah has to punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Unbelievers, men and women, and Allah turns in Mercy to the Believers, men and women: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁹ Al-Qur'an 45:15 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Qur'an 87:14-17 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁸¹ Al-Qur'an 33:73 (Yusuf Ali).

It was, therefore, proclaimed that those who wronged their souls (under the compulsion of their lusts, greed and other evil inclinations) may not consider themselves lost forever. Instead of desperation from the forgiveness of the Lord, they must turn to Him repentantly and try to seek forgiveness from him as soon as possible (Al-Qur'an 39:53). God is extremely merciful and compassionate. He is always inclined to forgive and save those who seek mercy, forgiveness and guidance to do good deeds of after their repentance. It is, therefore, extremely erroneous to believe that God's satisfaction of justice binds Him to punish the sinners. Suggestions like this divest the sovereign Lord of His unlimited powers and absolute discretion to deal with His creatures and slaves. God in fact derives no pleasure from punishing the people. He is more pleased with those who seek mercy from Him. This is evident from the repeated reminders to mankind e.g.:

Be ye foremost (in seeking) Forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers: that is the Grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom he pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding.⁴⁸²

It was for an everlasting guidance to humankind that the Lord revealed to Adam and Eve the appropriate words to implore forgiveness and mercy from Him. They, therefore, beseeched that:

"Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and anything We may have done that transgressed our duty: Establish our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist Faith."⁴⁸³

No doubt those who seek forgiveness from Him are sure to be loved and protected by Him.⁴⁸⁴

Islamic Traditions use word توبه to denote repentance. تاب توباً، mean 'to turn back' (from the wrong path or

⁴⁸² Al-Qur'an 57:21 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁸³ Al-Qur'an 3:147 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Qur'an 2:222.

sinfulness). According to *John Richardson's Dictionary* توبه means repentance, conversion or **vowing to sin no more**. The English language, therefore, uses repentance as an equivalent of توبه. Repentance usually signifies remorse, regret shame or penitence for the wrong done. توبه on the other hand has meanings vaster than mere repentance. **It essentially includes beseeching forgiveness of the Lord with a firm resolve not to repeat the transgression in future.** Besides the remorse and resolve to do good in future, the repentant must also exert to rectify or to ameliorate the wrong done as far as it was possible for him. The God, therefore, has not only assured the repentant of His forgiveness⁴⁸⁵ but also of His loving care and consolation to them.⁴⁸⁶ In view of this, human beings have no justification for disappointment from the forgiveness of the Lord and must turn to Him without a hesitation or pause. A Persian poet puts the same in the following words:

باز آ باز آ، هر آنچه هستی باز آ
 گر کافر و گمراه و بت پرستی باز آ
 این درگاه مادرگه نومیدی نیست
 صد بار اگر توبه شکستی باز آ⁴⁸⁷

Unlimited Chances of Repentance

Keeping in view the imperfections and shortcomings of humankind, the Lord did not put any limit on chances of repentance provided those were based on sincere remorse and regret. The Lord would, therefore, be entertaining all supplications of mankind where they resorted to any transgression being overpowered by their natural instincts, temptations and imperfections. Although it is unfair on the part of man to violate his commitment of righteous conduct in future yet due to inconstancy, weakness of character and other shortcomings pertaining to the nature of man, he

⁴⁸⁵ Al-Qur'an 110:3.

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:222.

⁴⁸⁷ Abu Saeed Abul Khair (967-1049), Persian Sufi and Poet, *Asrar-ul-Tawhid*.

may be driven to break his vow again and again. The most merciful and all compassionate God, therefore, has assured His acceptance of the plea of mercy and forgiveness from humankind as long as they continue to pray to him earnestly. Door for salvation is not, therefore, closed to the sinners who repent before the portents of death or signs of perdition become apparent to them.

The Lord was fully aware of the fact that man had been created weak.⁴⁸⁸ Man always loved the fleeting life⁴⁸⁹ and lacked constancy or firm resolve in him. He also was prone to forgetfulness.⁴⁹⁰ **Their occasional stumbling from the straight path would, therefore, necessitate them to repent again and again.** Repentance of humankind may not be a single time act but a repeated action on their part. This was the reason that the Almighty assured them to be oft-forgiving and merciful.⁴⁹¹ Only those will perish who turned away from the Lord and died without repentance and seeking mercy from Him.

The Christians and Jews must not, therefore, forget the assurance made by the Lord. The OT has it that:

Israel, the LORD who created you says, "Do not be afraid---I will save you. I have called you by name---you are mine."⁴⁹²

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.⁴⁹³

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall

⁴⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an 4:28. See also 17:11.

⁴⁸⁹ Al-Qur'an 75:20.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Qur'an 20:115

⁴⁹¹ Al-Qur'an 2:37, 54, 128, 10, 9:104, 118 etc.

⁴⁹² Isa 43:1 GNB.

⁴⁹³ Isa 44:22 KJV.

be as wool.⁴⁹⁴

The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.⁴⁹⁵

He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.⁴⁹⁶

Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.⁴⁹⁷

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.⁴⁹⁸

The Qur'an also endorses the same:

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!"⁴⁹⁹

The verse of the Qur'an quoted above treats mankind's appeal for mercy as worship or service of the Lord. God is so compassionate that He does not refuse any sincere repentance or entreaty for His mercy. **Believe it that had Iblees (Satan) beseeched forgiveness or mercy of the Lord, he surely would have been forgiven by the Almighty.** Satan enjoys the epithet of Iblees⁵⁰⁰ only because he refused to obey (worship) the Lord and got despaired of His mercy forever. Hence, all those who are despaired of the mercy of the Lord are the followers of Satan.

The same transpires from the advice Prophet Jacob gave to his sons:

"O my sons! go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and **never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those**

⁴⁹⁴ Isa 1:16-18 KJV.

⁴⁹⁵ Psalms 145:8 KJV.

⁴⁹⁶ Psalms 145:19-20 KJV.

⁴⁹⁷ Jer 22:3 KJV.

⁴⁹⁸ Jer 33:3 KJV.

⁴⁹⁹ Al-Qur'an 40:60 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰⁰ Utterly despaired or with broken spirit.

who have no faith."⁵⁰¹

The Almighty had, therefore, advised the Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) to pronounce that:

When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way.⁵⁰²

The Lord also pronounced that:

And yet, I am the God who forgives your sins, and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you.⁵⁰³

The Israelites were warned to turn away from their wickedness. They were assured that the Almighty will forgive their sins provided they repent with firm resolve to behave righteously thereafter. Jeremiah had been guided to proclaim that:

O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?⁵⁰⁴

And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.⁵⁰⁵

The Qur'an also upheld the same:

But any that (in this life) had repented, believed, and worked righteousness, will have hopes to be among those who achieve salvation.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰¹ Al-Qur'an 12:87 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰² Al-Qur'an 2:186 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰³ Isa 43:25 GNB.

⁵⁰⁴ Jer 4:14 KJV.

⁵⁰⁵ Jer 33:8 KJV.

⁵⁰⁶ Al-Qur'an 28:67 (Yusuf Ali).

Wrath of God against Those Who Do not Pray to Him

Although Almighty Allah's blessings are available to all human beings yet the Lord has assured special guidance to those who earnestly strive for it. He said:

And those who strive in Our (cause),- We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right.⁵⁰⁷

God is utterly displeased with those who do not humble themselves before Him. Such people disbelieve the repeated assurance of the Lord. They insolently refuse to pray to Him due to which they earn the wrath of the Almighty. They pay no heed to the word of God who had assured them that:

And He giveth you of all that ye ask for....⁵⁰⁸

According to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Lord is displeased with those who do not crave for anything from Him:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: ((قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ لَمْ يَدْعُ اللَّهَ مُبْتَغَانَهُ غَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ)) وفي رواية: ((مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ يَغْضَبْ عَلَيْهِ))

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "**Whoever does not ask from Allah, He (Allah) becomes angry at him.**"⁵⁰⁹

Only extremely arrogant or desperate people do not seek compassion of the Lord. All stiff-necked and rebellious among mankind will, therefore, be subjected to utter disgrace and torment in the Hell. As such, those who turn away from the Almighty in the hope of being rescued through some God other than the Lord need to search through the Torah or the prophets to uphold their creed. In case they find nothing in their support, they must revert to the Old Testament.

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Qur'an 29:69 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰⁸ Al-Qur'an 14:34 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰⁹ Muhammad Ibn-e-Yazid Bin Maja, *Sunan Ibn-e-Maja*, 2nd Edition (Lahore: Zia-ul-Qur'an Publications, 2012) p. 518, Hadees No. 3816. See Also Hadees No. 2118 of *Mishkat Shareef*.

To retrieve the repentant sinners, the Almighty had advised them to establish regular prayers and to do good things that may remove the evil.⁵¹⁰

Islamic traditions stress again and again that the Lord is always pleased with those who seek mercy and protection from Him. **He not only obliterates the transgressions of the repentant sinners but also consoles them by replacing/substituting their sins with good deeds:**

Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,⁵¹¹

All this shows extreme mercy and forgiveness of God for those who repent. As against them, the Lord has revealed His law to deal with the arrogant infidels who refuse to repent. It has been revealed that:

How shall Allah Guide those who reject Faith after they accepted it and bore witness that the Messenger was true and that Clear Signs had come unto them? **But Allah guides not a people unjust.** Of such the reward is that on them (rests) the curse of Allah, of His angels, and of all mankind;- Except for those that repent (Even) after that, and make amends; for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. But those who reject Faith after they accepted it, and then go on adding to their defiance of Faith,- never will their repentance be accepted; for they are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray. As to those who reject Faith, and die rejecting,- never would be accepted from any such as much gold as the earth contains, though they should offer it for ransom. For such is (in store) a penalty grievous, and they will find no helpers.⁵¹²

It is, therefore, obvious from the verses of the Bible and the Qur'an that there is no use of lamenting over the sin of Adam and Eve. Humankind has been enjoined to focus attention on discharging their individual or collective liabilities, in the manner the Lord guided them. As such, each individual is responsible for his own deeds. Everyone

⁵¹⁰ Al-Qur'an 11:114.

⁵¹¹ Al-Qur'an 25:70 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵¹² Al-Qur'an 25:86-91 (Yusuf Ali).

must, therefore, make strenuous efforts to fulfill his duties to the Lord and to avoid any violation of His commandments. In case of any transgression; involuntary or willful, he has no justification to consider himself lost forever. He must **remember that desperation from the mercy of the Lord is much more fatal than sin.**

Mixed Nature of Conduct

Since most of the people might have done good as well as evil deeds, the Lord revealed to them that:

But verily thy Lord,- to those who do wrong in ignorance, but who thereafter repent and make amends,- thy Lord, after all this, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁵¹³

Others (there are who) have acknowledged their wrong-doings: they have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil. Perhaps Allah will turn unto them (in Mercy): for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁵¹⁴

Lord's mercy and forgiveness is available to anyone who repents before his death and turns to the Lord to seek mercy and forgiveness from Him. The Almighty had directed mankind again and again not to get despaired of the infinite mercy of the Lord in any case. **No sin can be more fatal than turning away from the Lord in utter disappointment from Him.** All who turn to the Lord repentantly before the approach of death are sure to be forgiven by the Almighty.⁵¹⁵

The Lord was so compassionate and merciful towards humankind that He warrants forgiveness of all sins to those who beseech mercy from Him. Same also transpires from the verses of O.T. quoted earlier. The Almighty, in fact, neither had any estrangement from the sinners nor did He reject the earnest prayer of any sinner seeking salvation from Him. The Bible as well as the Qur'an stresses the same repeatedly:

The LORD is a God who is eager to save, so he exalted his laws and teachings, and he wanted his people to honor

⁵¹³ Al-Qur'an 16:119 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵¹⁴ Al-Qur'an 9:102 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵¹⁵ Al-Qur'an 39:53 (Yusuf Ali).

them.⁵¹⁶

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me..... Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.⁵¹⁷

All this testifies to the fact that the Lord is extremely merciful and compassionate to deal with the repentant sinners. We, therefore, find no evidence to prove God's estrangement from humankind. Similarly, the presumption of God's aversion to forgive the sins of humankind contradicts the teachings of the Old Testament. The Christian propagation that there can be no remission of sin without blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb has no basis in the O.T. This Christian creed, therefore, contradicts the teachings of repentance from John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

It was only some Christian fathers who made erroneous assumptions **that God had no option except to dispense justice strictly**. They seem to profess that God's attribute of justice prevailed over His attributes of mercy and forgiveness. They tend to believe that Justice did not allow the Lord to forgive even the minor negligence or lapse of His slaves. Wages of sin was death no matter it was a grievous or a minor sin. Any noncompliance or lapse warranted nothing less than death. God, perhaps, had no lesser punishments for venial sins. Each lapse was a sin that could not be forgiven without extorting blood sacrifice of man, lamb or animal as expiation for the same.

Such has been the propagation of the Christian fathers which increased gloom and despondency about God's treatment with the descendants of Adam and Eve. In utter despair, therefore, it was natural for people to turn away from the rigid or monstrous God of the Old Testament and to worship Jesus Christ, introduced as the new, young,

⁵¹⁶ Isa 42:21 GNB.

⁵¹⁷ Ps 50:15, 22-23 KJV.

loving and kind hearted God son of God. **No wonder that they ignore the Almighty to mention Jesus Christ more frequently in the New Testament.** He is the central figure and the main object of worship as the ultimate savior of the Christians. The God of the Old Testament has been pushed behind as a superannuated deity. Jesus Christ happens to be the new found, youthful and de facto God of the Christians. This preponderant importance and preference of Jesus over the Almighty is evident throughout the Christian theology. We, however, observe that their worship of Jesus Christ is derogatory to the Lord God and they can be called to account for their infidelity towards Him.

The Cardinal Sin

The first and the foremost injunction of the Lord had been to confess Him the God and the only Lord of the Universe. He said:

These are among the (precepts of) wisdom, which thy Lord has revealed to thee. **Take not, with Allah, another object of worship, lest thou shouldst be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected.**⁵¹⁸

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?-

... He hath commanded that ye worship none but Him: that is the right religion, but most men understand not..."⁵¹⁹

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents..."⁵²⁰

For We assuredly sent amongst every People a messenger, (with the Command), "Serve Allah, and eschew Evil!":⁵²¹

"And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?"⁵²²

⁵¹⁸ Al-Qur'an 17:39 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵¹⁹ Al-Qur'an 12:40 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵²⁰ Al-Qur'an 17:23 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵²¹ Al-Qur'an 6:36 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵²² Al-Qur'an 36:60-61 (Yusuf Ali).

Muslims are enjoined to confess لا اله الا الله (i.e. *There is no God but Allah*) and to continue repeating it as much as possible. We must note here that لا اله الا الله is not a mere confession but a primary mode of worship reckoned as crown of good deeds done by a person. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلَحُوا.

O people Say There is no God But Allah, so you would find salvation⁵²³

The Holy Prophet also said:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

It is narrated on the authority of 'Uthman that the Messenger of Allah said. He who died knowing (fully well) that there is no god but Allah entered Paradise.⁵²⁴

This shows that anyone who confessed with firm faith that there was no deity except Allah, will ultimately enter into Jannah. The confession, however, does not grant anyone immunity from sin committed after the confession. The Lord may punish even the believers for their capital crimes for the term to be determined by Him but ultimately the faithful confessors of لا اله الا الله will be saved and entered into Jannah.

All creatures had been enjoined not to worship Gods other than the Almighty because there was neither any God besides Him nor did the Lord share His authority with anyone else. This had always been the first tenet of faith and the essence of the primary teachings of all the prophets from Adam to Muhammad ﷺ. As regards the Israelites, the Lord had clearly pronounced that:

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **Thou shalt have no other gods**

⁵²³ Al-Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, *Musnad-e-Ahmad*, Hadith No. 15448.

⁵²⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Hadith Number 0039.

before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: **for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.⁵²⁵

In view of the above those who worship the icon of Jesus Christ, saints, heroes or other figures must revert to the word of God preached by Moses the prophets and Jesus Christ himself.

The *Deuteronomy* has rendered the first commandment in the following words.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:⁵²⁶

All prophets of Israel from Moses to Jesus Christ preached the same faith till their deaths.

The Qur'an, too, has stressed absolute oneness of the Lord in the following words:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ.

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. 4. and there is none like unto Him.⁵²⁷

Muslims, therefore, confess as under:

اشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمداً عبده ورسوله

"I confess there is no God Except Allah and I also confess that Muhammad is Slave and Messenger of Allah"

Those who believe in multiplicity of Gods or ascribe associates and partners with Him are considered infidels and the worst sinners in the world. Assigning partners with the Lord is the cardinal sin which shall not be remitted in any case except to those who repented during their lives

⁵²⁵ Exo 20:1-6 KJV.

⁵²⁶ Deu 6:4 KJV.

⁵²⁷ Al-Qur'an Ch. 112 (Yusuf Ali).

and announced their recantation about شرك (assigning partners with God). Believers in Trinity may, therefore, reconsider their stance keeping in view the monotheistic teachings of Jesus Christ and all other prophets before him. After confession of God and keeping in view the teachings of the prophets, humankind has no recourse except to obey all the commandments of the Lord.

It may, however, be understood that human lapse to obey some commandment (like Adam) and even refusal to obey (like Iblees) is not the prime or cardinal sin which cannot be remitted by the Almighty to whomsoever He may please. The offense is pardonable to the repentant transgressors seeking mercy and forgiveness from the Lord. The Lord being extremely compassionate towards human beings may even forgive those who did not have the opportunity to seek His forgiveness. As against this, those who do not acknowledge the Almighty as the only Lord God of the Universe or those who turn to other Gods in utter disappointment from the Lord are considered as infidels and rebels. Instead of slaves, they become adversaries of the Almighty. They as such, have committed the cardinal crimes which shall in no case be remitted unless they had the opportunity to renounce their faith in other Gods and unless they turned to the Lord repentantly seeking mercy and forgiveness from Him. As such, those who die before recanting faith in the false Gods get utterly lost forever. God said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا
عَظِيمًا

Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed.⁵²⁸

As against the polytheists and those who ascribe partners with God, other people will be withdrawn sooner or later

⁵²⁸ Al-Qur'an 4:48 (Yusuf Ali) see also 4:116.

from hell. No believer will, therefore, remain in Hell forever. A tradition of the Prophet ﷺ affirms the same:

Anas b. Malik reported: Verily the Apostle said: He who professed: There is no god but Allah, would be brought out of the Fire even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of a barley grain. Then he who professed: There is no god but Allah, would come out of the Fire, even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of a wheat grain. He would then bring out from the Fire he who professed: There is no god but Allah, even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of an atom. Ibn Minhal has made an addition (of these words) in his narration: Yazid said: I met Shu'ba and narrated to him this hadith. Shu'ba said: Qatada transmitted to us this hadith from Anas b. Malik who heard it from the Apostle of Allah with this alteration that he substituted the word Zurra (grain) in place of Zarra (atom). Yazid said: Abu Bistam has made a change in it.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Chapter 83, Hadith Number 376.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Cataclysm

Many people do not believe in the ultimate end of the earth and the universe nor do they believe in their resurrection and accountability before the Lord. The Qur'an has, however, revealed that:

It is He who created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): **the day He saith, "Be", behold! it is.** His word is the truth. His will be the dominion the day the trumpet will be blown. He knoweth the unseen as well as that which is open. For He is the Wise, well-acquainted (with all things).⁵³⁰

Muslims believe that all heavenly bodies and creatures of the Lord will exist only up to the terms appointed for them. Ultimately, there will be a day when trumpet will be blown and every living being on Earth and in the heaven will die. The only exception to death will be the Lord of the heavens and the earth. The Lord has, therefore, warned humankind that:

And call not, besides Allah, on another god. There is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His own Face. To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye (all) be brought back.⁵³¹

It has also been revealed that:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

Every soul shall have a taste of death in the end to Us shall ye be brought back.⁵³²

About the Sun, Moon and the Planets it has been said:

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ .

38. And the sun runs his course for a period determined for him: that is the decree of (Him), the Exalted in Might, the All-

⁵³⁰ Al-Qur'an 6:73

⁵³¹ Al-Qur'an 28:88.

⁵³² Al-Qur'an 29:57 (Yusuf Ali).

Knowing.⁵³³

Ultimately all heavenly bodies must crumble down to form one entity again. God said:

The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books (completed),- even as We produced the first creation, so shall We produce a new one: a promise We have undertaken: truly shall We fulfill it.⁵³⁴

It has been further revealed that:

1. When the sky is rent asunder, 2. And hearkens to (the Command of) its Lord, and it must needs (do so);- 3. And when the earth is flattened out, 4. And casts forth what is within it and becomes (clean) empty, 5. And hearkens to (the Command of) its Lord,- and it must needs (do so);- (then will come Home the full reality). 6. O thou man! Verily thou art ever toiling on towards thy Lord-painfully toiling,- but thou shalt meet Him.⁵³⁵

When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion,⁵³⁶

We, therefore, reach the conclusion that **in contrast to 'Big Bang', there may occur a 'Big Crunch'** when the universe will be rolled up and the Almighty Allah may recreate another universe like the one He had created in the first instance. It will be the time of resurrection of man and jinn and the day of reckoning for them. The new world may consist of extremely vast cosmos in one integrated unit converted mostly into the paradise while there will also be hell for the transgressors.

⁵³³ Al-Qur'an 36:38.

⁵³⁴ Al-Qur'an 21:104

The Qur'an tells us: "All that is on earth will perish: But will abide (for ever) the Face of thy Lord,- full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour" (55:26-27). Other verses refer to general cataclysm in the universe. It has, however, been revealed that after bringing everything to an end, God will again command a new creation of the universe as a firm promise from Him. The promised creation may be in the shape of a single unit instead of galaxies and stars dispersed throughout the space. Hell and heaven may be close to each other. The extremely large paradise forming a unit may suffice to accommodate each person with the space in the garden as wide as the distance between heaven and earth (Al-Qur'an 57:21).

⁵³⁵ Al-Qur'an 84:1-6

⁵³⁶ Al-Qur'an 99:1

The Resurrection

We discussed under the topic of Amana (Covenant) that mankind had taken on them to fulfill the trust or the covenant independently. Humankind were given a fixed term to live on earth after which they were destined to die to be resurrected at a time appointed by the Lord. The nonbelievers, however, deny the same:

They say: "What! when we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?" Say: "(Nay!) be ye stones or iron, "Or created matter which, in your minds, is hardest (to be raised up),- (Yet shall ye be raised up)!" then will they say: "Who will cause us to return?" Say: "He who created you first!" Then will they wag their heads towards thee, and say, "When will that be?" Say, "May be it will be quite soon!"⁵³⁷

After the Cataclysm, the Almighty will raise all the dead to life as revealed in the following:

WHEN THE SUN is shrouded in darkness, (2) and when the stars lose their light, (3) and when the mountains are made to vanish, (4) and when she-camels big with young, about to give birth, are left untended, (5) and when all beasts are gathered together, (6) and when the seas boil over, (7) and when all human beings are coupled [with their deeds], (8) and when the girl-child that was buried alive is made to ask (9) for what crime she had been slain, 81:10 and when the scrolls [of men's deeds] are unfolded, (11) and when heaven is laid bare, (12) and when the blazing fire [of hell] is kindled bright, (13) and when paradise is brought into view: (14) [on that Day] every human being will come to know what he has prepared [for himself].⁵³⁸

1. When the Sky is cleft asunder; 2. When the Stars are scattered; 3. When the Oceans are suffered to burst forth; 4. And when the Graves are turned upside down;- 5. (Then) shall each soul know what it hath sent forward and (what it hath) kept back. 6. O man! What has seduced thee from thy Lord Most Beneficent?- 7. Him Who created thee. Fashioned thee in due proportion, and gave thee a just bias; 8. In

⁵³⁷ Al-Qur'an 17:49

⁵³⁸ Al-Qur'an 81:1-14

whatever Form He wills, does He put thee together.⁵³⁹

7. Assuredly, what ye are promised must come to pass. 8. Then when the stars become dim; 9. When the heaven is cleft asunder; 10. When the mountains are scattered (to the winds) as dust; 11. And when the messengers are (all) appointed a time (to collect);- 12. For what Day are these (portents) deferred? 13. For the Day of Sorting out. 14. And what will explain to thee what is the Day of Sorting out? 15. Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!⁵⁴⁰

21. Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder, 22. And thy Lord cometh, and His angels, rank upon rank, 23. And Hell, that Day, is brought (face to face),- on that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him? 24. He will say: "Ah! Would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for(this) my (Future) Life!" 25. For, that Day, His Chastisement will be such as none (else) can inflict, 26. And His bonds will be such as none (other) can bind.⁵⁴¹

The Qur'an tells us that after an unspecified time subsequent to the death/ extinction of everything in the universe, the Almighty may resurrect the human beings and Jinn for their accountability on the Day of Judgment. It will be a day when each individual will be held responsible for his own acts and deeds.

In spite of knowing everything perfectly,⁵⁴² the Lord appointed the angels (كراما كاتبين) to maintain an accurate record of each individual's good or evil deeds to serve as evidence against the Jinn or Men:

Nay! nit ye do reject Right and Judgment! But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you,- Kind and honourable,- Writing down (your deeds): They know (and understand) all that ye do.⁵⁴³

The record produced before each person will be so vivid and unmistakable that everyone will himself be able to see the end result of his endeavor. God will command them to:

Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to

⁵³⁹ Al-Qur'an 82:1-8

⁵⁴⁰ Al-Qur'an 77:7-15

⁵⁴¹ Al-Qur'an 89:21-26

⁵⁴² Job 34:21-22, Ps 139:1-16.

⁵⁴³ Al-Qur'an 82:10-12.

make out an account against thee.⁵⁴⁴

Besides the written records of human beings, their countenance, eyes, ears, skins and limbs etc. will be enough to prove their piety or wickedness. The evidence will be so accurate and incontrovertible that it will be futile to get any confessions from the sinners. They will not be able to say anything in their defense. The Qur'an reveals that:

That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did.⁵⁴⁵

On that Day no question will be asked of man or Jinn as to his sin (....) (For) the sinners will be known by their marks: and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet.⁵⁴⁶

That Day will Man be told (all) that he put forward, and all that he put back. Nay, man will be evidence against himself, **Even though he were to put up his excuses.**⁵⁴⁷

The Lord revealed that after their resurrection, the mankind will have to stand before Him for the final judgment. The Almighty will assign a particular weight to each and every act of man and their good or evil deeds will be put in a scale. The description of scale is apparently allegorical. Human beings have no perfect knowledge about the methods to be adopted by the Lord to evaluate the endeavors of humankind. We do not know the exact nature of the scale to weigh or to measure the good or evil deeds of humankind yet we are sure that God's evaluation will be accurate and perfect in all respects. God, therefore, says:

We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least, and if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account.⁵⁴⁸

Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found)

⁵⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an 17:14 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁴⁵ Al-Qur'an 36:65 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Qur'an 55:39, 41 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁴⁷ Al-Qur'an 75:13-15 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Qur'an 21:47 (Yusuf Ali).

heavy, Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light,- Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire Blazing fiercely!⁵⁴⁹

Human beings will have to account for the actual sins committed by them and be recompensed in accordance with their own deeds. Their grades and degrees in the heaven or hell will be determined in accordance with their own deeds:

And to all are (assigned) degrees according to the deeds which they (have done), and in order that (Allah) may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them.⁵⁵⁰

It transpires from the above that no one will be answerable for the so called Original Sin of Adam nor any Christian be saved for the holiness or vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ.⁵⁵¹ No dying and rising gods worshiped by the pagans will be able to save their worshipers. All the prophets including Jesus Christ and Muhammad will be standing before the Lord to adduce evidence that they had left no stones unturned to convey the true message of the Lord to their people. Almighty Allah will be the master of the Day of Judgment who alone may award final punishment or forgive anyone He may please.

The Day of Judgment

This will be the Day of Judgment on which humankind will have to account for their deeds. God says:

On that Day of Dominion will be that of Allah: He will judge between them: so those who believe and work righteous deeds will be in Gardens of Delight. And for those who reject Faith and deny our Signs, there will be a humiliating Punishment.⁵⁵²

Every soul shall have a taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of Life): For the life of this world is

⁵⁴⁹ Al-Qur'an 101:6-11 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁵⁰ Al-Qur'an 46:19 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁵¹ Al-Qur'an 6:164, 17:15, 35:18

⁵⁵² Al-Qur'an 22:56-57 (Yusuf Ali).

but goods and chattels of deception.⁵⁵³

Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.⁵⁵⁴

Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; That man can have nothing but what he strives for; That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight: Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete;⁵⁵⁵

It has always been the wishful thinking of man to crave for all benefits and awards without any effort or exertion on his part. Similarly, **punishment for misdeeds is distasteful to each individual and everyone would prefer to transfer it to someone else.** As against the afore-stated desires of mankind, no such injustice can be permitted by the Lord. Performance of each individual may be weighed or evaluated through various means to ascertain endeavor of each individual on earth. Ultimately everyone will come to know the exact marks (evaluation) obtained by him. People will not be asked even to admit or deny their acts. Written records will also be available to adduce evidence about the conduct of humankind. Besides this, the evidence of the limbs, skins and body parts of men and Jinn will also suffice to decide their fate. God says:

At length, when they reach the (Fire), their hearing, their sight, and their skins will bear witness against them, as to (all) their deeds. 41/21 They will say to their skins: "Why bear ye witness against us?" They will say: "Allah hath given us speech,- (He) Who giveth speech to everything: He created you for the first time, and unto Him were ye to return. 41/22 "Ye did not seek to hide yourselves, lest your hearing, your sight, and your skins should bear witness against you! But ye did think that Allah knew not many of the things that ye used to do!⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵³ Al-Qur'an 3:185 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁵⁴ Al-Qur'an 99:7

⁵⁵⁵ Al-Qur'an 53:38

⁵⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an 41:20-22

God being Creator and master of His creatures has the exclusive power and the right to award grace marks to any one he may please. He says:

To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth, for Allah hath power over all things.⁵⁵⁷

It is entirely the prerogative of the Lord to forgive or to punish anyone He may please. No human beings including priests and pontiffs have any right to take confessions to forgive the sins.

Evidence and the Criterion for Evaluation

We had discussed earlier that the Lord would accord specific weightage to each type of sin as well as good deeds. Consequently, on the Day of Judgment sins would be put in one side of the scale and good deeds on the other. Nothing will escape notice of the Lord and ultimate fate of humankind will be determined in the manner detailed below:

And verily, **We shall recount their whole story with knowledge, for We were never absent** (at any time or place). The balance that day will be true (to nicety): those whose scale (of good) will be heavy, will prosper: Those whose scale will be light, will be their souls in perdition, for that they wrongfully treated Our signs.⁵⁵⁸

"On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah cautions you (To remember) Himself. And Allah is full of kindness to those that serve Him."⁵⁵⁹

"He that works evil will not be requited but by the like thereof: and he that works a righteous deed - whether man or woman - and is a Believer- such will enter the Garden (of Bliss): Therein will they have abundance without measure."⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an 2:284 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁵⁸ Al-Qur'an 7:7-9 (Yusuf Ali). See also 23:102.

⁵⁵⁹ Al-Qur'an 3:30 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁰ Al-Qur'an 40:40 (Yusuf Ali).

What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds,- that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make.⁵⁶¹

Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light,- Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire Blazing fiercely!⁵⁶²

Yea, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: so that He rewards those who do evil, according to their deeds, and He rewards those who do good, with what is best.⁵⁶³

It is, therefore, clear that instead of a few or a single sin, the Lord will take into account the overall performance of an individual during his life. Everyone will see for himself the exact weight or marking for his good or bad deeds. God's evaluation or the scale will also determine the rank and place of the individual in the heaven or Hell. No one will either be able to bear the burden of another or to expiate his sins. Each one will receive the meed of his own deeds.

No Intercession without Prior Permission

The unchanging nature of the Law of cause and effect or award and punishment in accordance with the deeds of the individual has been upheld both by the Bible as well as the Qur'an. Each one will, therefore, be accountable for his own deeds. As such, **no one will be held responsible for the sin of Adam nor will anyone be able to share the sinlessness or sanctity of the Christ.** Adam will stand before the Lord to account for his own deeds and Jesus his own. Sin or virtue of Adam or Jesus cannot be distributed like inheritance of the material assets of the ancestors. The Law of the Lord has no provision for inheritance of punishment or reward from the ancestors. The concept has

⁵⁶¹ Al-Qur'an 45:21 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶² Al-Qur'an 101:6-11 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶³ Al-Qur'an 53:31 (Yusuf Ali).

no scriptural support from the Old Testament nor did any prophet of the Lord from Adam to Jesus ever believe in it.

No one will be able to appear before the Lord as a substitute or a representative of others. The everlasting law of the Lord has no room for any vicarious sacrifice. It was about 30 years after the death/ascension of Jesus Christ that St. Paul introduced the new theology that paved the way for shifting entire blame of the past present or future sins of mankind to Adam and Eve. The doctrine suggests inheritance of a corrupted nature by all the descendants of Adam due to which they became captive to sinfulness. Besides clear-cut denial of human responsibility, the creed suggests good excuse as well as solace to the sinners who willfully commit transgressions exercising the free will enjoyed by them. The doctrine, therefore, allows full freedom to individuals for the inequities committed by them.

The theory of salvation based on redemption through vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ is, therefore, the greatest attraction provided by the Christian faith. It provides open general license to the Christians to do whatever they like. They need not fear any accountability or punishment for their crimes because they enjoy blanket bail in Christ who had already given his life to expiate their sins and to assure them holiness, salvation and the life everlasting in the Hereafter. No one among them stops to ponder that instead of any revelation from the Lord, the doctrine suggesting salvation through sacrifice of Jesus Christ is based on assumptions and wrong interpretations of various parts of the OT by certain Christian fathers who had no authority to do so.

There is nothing in the Old Testament as well in the Qur'an to support the doctrine of the inheritance of sin from Adam. No transgression or good deed of an ancestor can affect the genetic code of his progeny. There can be no change in the nature created by the Lord. Baptism can only serve as a turning point for a sinner who repents and resolves to initiate a new life to do good in future. It cannot be taken as a device to effect any change in the nature of creation.

All those who turn to the Lord repentantly and do good thereafter are assured of the mercy and salvation from Him. Baptism, therefore, has nothing to do with the deliverance from the Original Sin the existence of which has not been acknowledged by the Old Testament, the prophets of Israel and the Glorious Qur'an.

Human Beings are born with the purity of nature free from any stain of sin on them. Instead of worrying for the so-called Original Sin of Adam, each prophet warned his community to refrain from the sins to be committed by the individuals themselves. No one will be held guilty for the acts of Adam. No excuse of sin will be accepted by blaming him nor will Jesus be able to expiate for the persistently committed sins of the wicked people throughout their lives.

Each individual shall be accountable for his own faith and deeds on the Day of Judgment. It will be a day when no protector will be able to protect anyone. The Lord proclaims that:

And those whom they invoke besides Allah have no power of intercession;- only he who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him). If thou ask them, who created them, they will certainly say, Allah: How then are they deluded away (from the Truth)?⁵⁶⁴

Verily the Day of sorting out is the time appointed for all of them,- The Day when no protector can avail his client in aught, and no help can they receive, Except such as receive Allah's Mercy: for He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.⁵⁶⁵

Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that Day, nor will one ask after another! Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy,- they will attain salvation: But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls, in Hell will they abide. The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with their lips displaced.⁵⁶⁶

(It will be said): "This is because of the deeds which thy hands

⁵⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an 43:86-87 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an 44:40-42 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Qur'an 23:101-104 (Yusuf Ali).

sent forth, for verily Allah is not unjust to His servants. There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!⁵⁶⁷

About Jesus Christ, it has been said:

He was no more than a servant: We granted Our favour to him, and We made him an example to the Children of Israel. And if it were Our Will, We could make angels from amongst you, succeeding each other on the earth.⁵⁶⁸

Jesus himself acknowledged that:

When Jesus came with Clear Signs, he said: "Now have I come to you with Wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which ye dispute: therefore fear Allah and obey me. "For Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord: so worship ye Him: this is a Straight Way."⁵⁶⁹

Everlasting Way to Salvation

On realizing their fault, both Adam and Eve had confessed their guilt plainly. They repented about their mistake and humbly beseeched the Lord to forgive them. It was due to the humble invocation of Adam and Eve that the Lord God was pleased to inspire to them the words to seek mercy and forgiveness from Him. God revealed that:

Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord Turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.⁵⁷⁰

The inspiration of the Lord, therefore, stands as an everlasting guidance to man for his salvation for all times to come. Adam and Eve beseeched the mercy of the Lord according to the words of Inspiration quoted below. They said:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ .

"Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an 22:10-11 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an 43:59-60 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an 43:63-64 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁰ Al-Qur'an 2:37

not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.⁵⁷¹

The words of inspiration remain a universal, unfailing and everlasting formula for seeking forgiveness, mercy and salvation from the Lord. Whosoever repents sincerely and earnestly to seek forgiveness of Allah, is not only sure to be forgiven his fault but can also hope for further consolation in the shape of additional blessings from the Lord. Allah assures the same:

53. Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **54.** "Turn ye to our Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that ye shall not be helped."⁵⁷²

And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: For those things, that are good remove those that are evil: Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember(their Lord):⁵⁷³

Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for **Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,**⁵⁷⁴

Prophet Adam realized and confessed his guilt immediately, and without any hesitation, he humbly surrendered himself unconditionally to the mercy of Allah. The Immediate and humble submission of Adam was appreciated by the Lord, by the forgiveness and also by exalting Adam to the distinction as under:

But his Lord chose him (for His Grace): He turned to him, and gave him Guidance.⁵⁷⁵

The fact is that God had always been providing humankind with guidance to be virtuous. In case, they falter from the straight path, they were enjoined to turn to the Lord repentantly for their salvation.

⁵⁷¹ Al-Qur'an 7:23

⁵⁷² Al-Qur'an 39:53-54

⁵⁷³ Al-Qur'an 11:114 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁴ Al-Qur'an 25:70 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Qur'an 20:122

If any one does evil or wrongs his own soul but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.⁵⁷⁶

Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!⁵⁷⁷

Persisting in the sinful deeds obstinately or to aspire for transferring their liabilities to others was the misconception leading to fatal consequences. To repent of one's transgressions and to resolve to do good in future was the guidance provided by the Lord. **Disappointment from the mercy of the Lord was the act of Satan due to which he has also been called ابليس (Iblees).** ابليس means one who falls into utter despair or becomes confused and bewildered. As such, those who lose hope in the mercy and protection of the Lord fall in the category of Iblees. Factually, there is no end to the mercy or forgiveness of the Lord provided man repents sincerely and prays for the mercy earnestly as stated earlier.

Almighty Allah has also assured us about acceptance of our prayers:

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!"⁵⁷⁸

Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger said:

When Allah created the creation as He was upon the Throne, He put down in His Book: **Verily, My mercy predominates My wrath.**⁵⁷⁹

This is the only and the unchanging Divine Law of salvation. Instead of getting disappointed from the mercy of God, man must repent sincerely, and try to do good deeds to please the Lord. No transgression can create a permanent estrangement between man and God unless man becomes obstinate and continues to rebel against the Lord

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Qur'an 4:110 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁷ Al-Qur'an 41:34 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁸ Al-Qur'an 40:60

⁵⁷⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, Book No. 37, Chapter 4, Hadith No. 6626. See also 6627, 6628.

persistently. Turning to the Lord repentantly and doing good is the only way to please Him and to get the evils removed from one's account. God addressed Moses that:

10. "Now do thou throw thy rod!" But when he saw it moving (of its own accord) as if it had been a snake, he turned back in retreat, and retraced not his steps: "O Moses!" (it was said), "Fear not: truly, in My presence, those called as messengers have no fear, **11.** "But if any have done wrong and have thereafter substituted good to take the place of evil, truly, I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."⁵⁸⁰

The lesson we learn from the above is immediate confession of fault and beseeching the Lord for His forgiveness. Any endeavor to defend one's act or to delay in turning to the Lord reflects indifference or heedlessness which amounts to additional offence against the Almighty.

Conclusion

The Lord God had created everything with the sole purpose that it may serve (worship) Him. For billions of years after the initial creation, therefore, the Almighty kept all creatures under His compulsion. They, as such, continued to serve Him flawlessly throughout the Universe for billions and billions of years thereafter till He was pleased to create on Earth two new species i.e. Jinn and Man with freedom from compulsion. Instead of programming or inbuilt guidance, therefore, the new species were created in such complicated manner that they had intellect and free will to decide between different options before them and to act accordingly. They were, however, provided with guidance from the Lord through His prophets sent to each and every community in the world. Those who abide by the guidance of the Lord will be saved and entered into the Garden of Bliss by the most Gracious, Most Merciful Lord God of the Universe. As against them, those who falter away from the straight path guided by the Lord and stoop low to fulfill their own lusts and desires will be accountable for their own deeds. The criterion for salvation, therefore, is whether to

⁵⁸⁰ Al-Qur'an, 27:10-11

follow the guidance of the Almighty or our own reasoning, logic or other human speculations.

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